

February 18, 2026

Town Board: Mayor Kerry Barney, Kurt Sawyer, and Gary Goble

Staff: Carly Burrows and Tyler Mendenhall

Public: Russell Riggs, Brett Burrows, Scott Walter, Jaycen Walter

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Barney offered the opening prayer and then led those present in the pledge. The meeting began at 7pm.

2. Approval of January 2026 Minutes

Councilor Goble motioned to accept the previous minutes Councilor Sawyer 2nd the motion, the vote was unanimous.

3. Review Invoices, checks & financial report/budget

3.1 January 2026

Councilor Sawyer motioned to approve the January invoices and Councilor Barney 2nd the motion, the vote was unanimous.

3.3 Extra Monthly Invoices

Town Clerk states there are no extra monthly invoices.

4. Public Hearings

4.1 Council Appointments and interviews

The council had at least one open seat and conducted interviews to fill it. Public notice was provided with date, time, and deadline for submissions. Applicants had to be registered voters in Hatch.

Candidates

1. Brett Burrows

- Motivation:
 - Likes Hatch and wants to be involved and present for discussions and “arguments.”
 - Acknowledges he doesn’t “know a lot about politics” but doesn’t see that as a bad thing.
- Vision for Hatch:
 - Hopes the town “continues to grow and progress.”
 - Interested in more businesses and bringing more people into town.
- Background / Skills:
 - Last full-time position: Zions Bank in Salt Lake, in the bankruptcy area; experience “double-checking accounts” and working as a team lead.
 - Has accounting/business coursework from college.

- Semi-retired; has worked seasonally at Panguitch Lake, and as a substitute teacher and in a school kitchen.
- Describes himself as someone who likes to stay busy and do something useful.
- Regular voter in state and federal elections.

2. Russ Riggs

- Motivation:
 - States he “really doesn’t” want to be on the council, but recognizes someone has to serve for the town to function.
 - Concerned about careful use of limited town resources and believes some past decisions have not been in the town’s best interest.
 - Describes himself as very frugal (“a miser when it comes to spending money”) and wants to ensure investments truly benefit residents.
- Experience & Background:
 - Retired St. George City Police Department (30 years; reached lieutenant over investigations).
 - Often attended St. George City Council meetings as part of admin staff to answer questions; saw the importance of public attendance and involvement in budgeting.
 - After retirement (2005), moved to Hatch (family roots there) and consistently attended Hatch council meetings as a citizen for years.
 - Served about two years on the Planning Commission, then about 10 years as Planning & Zoning Director in Hatch.
 - During that time, helped resolve subdivision and zoning issues (e.g., a subdivision that existed on paper but not in reality, and other structural planning problems).
 - Has gathered and studied ordinances from Kanab, Beaver, Richfield, Cedar City, St. George, etc., to bring professional standards to Hatch.
- Stated Approach & Values:
 - Strong belief in showing up to meetings to understand and influence decisions.
 - Openly admits he can be “controversial” and very direct; will say exactly what he thinks if asked.
 - Emphasizes education and research before making decisions (learning from cities with professional staff).
 - Wants the town to be “more careful with resources” and to plan ahead.

Appointment Decision & Process

- The council:
 - Confirmed both candidates are registered voters.
 - Thanked both for applying, noting there had previously been as many as four interested people, but some had withdrawn.

- Held a brief discussion on proper procedure:
 - Acknowledged that voting must occur in a public meeting, but that council members could briefly retire to another room to discuss pros and cons first, then return and vote in public.
- Selection:
 - After discussion, the council informally polled and agreed on appointing Russ Riggs to fill the open council seat.
 - A motion was made and seconded to appoint Russ Riggs; all present council members voted in favor.
 - Councilor Sawyer motioned to appoint Russell Riggs as council member, Councilor Goble 2nd the motion, the vote was unanimous.
- Oath of Office:
 - Russ was immediately sworn in during the meeting:
 - He repeated the oath to support, obey, and defend the Constitutions of the United States and Utah and to discharge the duties of his office with fidelity.
 - Once sworn, he became an active council member.

4.2 Scott Walter Lot Line Adjustment

Scott's Request and Property Layout

- Scott Walters appeared before the council to discuss a lot line adjustment for his property.
- He had previously come to the town and received approval for a simple lot line adjustment, but:
 - He later realized he needed to modify the configuration to create a dedicated access for a potential future buyer or one of his children.
- Existing situation (as described by Scott):
 - The property consists of two existing lots that he bought that way:
 - Roughly 1.5-acre lot and a 3-acre lot (later clarified to be about 0.97 acres and 3.7 acres after adjustment).
 - His house sits near and over the current internal lot line.
- Revised proposal:
 - Originally he only moved the internal lot line to create a 1-acre parcel.
 - Now he also wants to add a 25-foot-wide strip (access) from that one-acre lot out to the public road so that:
 - The adjusted lot directly fronts a city street (to comply with ordinance).
 - The future owner of that lot would own their own access instead of relying solely on easements.
 - He showed the council drawings, explaining that he is just adding a 25-foot access strip to his previous adjustment.

Access and Ordinance Issues

- Key ordinance constraint:
 - Town ordinance requires that a buildable lot must be at a public street.
 - Scott's motivation for the 25-foot strip is to ensure that if he ever sells that back lot, it meets this requirement and can get utilities (especially water) legally and practically.

- Scott explained his plan for access easements after the adjustment:
 - He intends to grant a right of way on the 56-foot existing access for neighbors to reach their properties.
 - He will also grant himself a right of way over his 25-foot strip, so both sides will have full legal access.

Questions/Concerns Raised by Council (Primarily Russ & Kurt)

1. History and number of lots:
 - Russ asked whether the area near Scott's house had been one parcel or two originally.
 - Scott clarified:
 - When he bought it from Kurt, the house area was already two separate lots (about 1+ and 3 acres), plus a separate four-acre piece across from Dennis that he subdivided separately.
 - This was important because:
 - A simple lot line adjustment is allowed between existing legal lots; no new lots are being created.
2. Road width / access standard:
 - Russ noted the town ordinance requires a 66-foot right-of-way for a road.
 - Scott's existing access is about 56 feet, originally created under an older ordinance that only required 50 feet.
 - Kurt commented that the 56-foot section is "grandfathered in" because it was done under the old rules, and it is treated more as a private driveway, not a new public road.
 - Russ expressed concern about relying on a substandard-width access if, in practice, that driveway serves more than one lot.
3. Easement vs. right-of-way at the Wilson property:
 - Russ clarified that the town has a utility easement, not a full public street right-of-way, on part of the Wilson property.
 - There was some confusion historically; Scott said he had been told that area was town right-of-way, but Russ said it is only an easement for utilities (water line), not a travel right-of-way.
4. Water meter placement and future service:
 - A long discussion followed concerning Scott's existing water meter, which:
 - Is currently placed off the town road and in an awkward location (near/within the Wilson property area, outside Scott's fence).
 - Has created access and fence issues for the town when reading the meter.
 - Points raised:
 - Kerry emphasized that meters are normally located on or adjacent to town roads, and Scott's is an exception and a past mistake the town wants to avoid repeating.
 - Scott stated he did not choose the current meter location; he asked for it to be on his side of the fence, but was told by the then-operator (Dave) that it had to be on "town property."

- Russ suggested:
 - The most practical fix is to move the meter approximately five feet inside Scott's fence onto his property so town staff can access it by driving up the existing driveway.
 - The town should bear the cost, since the original location was the town's decision, not Scott's.
- Alternative options discussed:
 - Moving the meter all the way down to the street (Scott said he would accept that if the town insisted, though it could affect pressure and cost).
 - Adding a second meter on the new lot so both lots have meters near the street, but Russ cautioned about overall system capacity and possible need for a temporary moratorium on new hookups until Ensign Engineering confirms adequate supply.
- For the lot line adjustment itself, Scott emphasized:
 - His request does not add a new lot, just reshapes two existing lots.
 - The lot must front the street to remain legal for future sale and water connection.

Decision on Whether Planning & Zoning Must Review

- There was discussion on whether the adjustment needed to go to Planning & Zoning:
 - Russ noted it is difficult to get Planning & Zoning members to attend meetings, and for a simple lot line adjustment between existing lots, the town council is authorized to decide directly.
 - Kerry's concern was procedural: he wanted to be sure they were following the proper process.
- Consensus:
 - This qualifies as a simple lot line adjustment (not creating new lots), so council can act without sending it to Planning & Zoning.

Council Action

- After discussion:
 - The council expressed they were generally in favor of the adjustment, recognizing Scott's need to have the back lot front a public street.
 - A motion was made to approve Scott Walters' lot line adjustment (including the additional 25-foot access strip).
 - The motion was seconded and approved by the council (all in favor).
- Follow-up / Related Items:
 - Water meter/utility issues will be further addressed once the town has more information from Ensign Engineering about system capacity and configuration.
 - The meter relocation (5 feet inside the fence) and any potential additional meter will be revisited after that; no final action was taken on meter relocation in this meeting.
- Vote:

- Mayor Barney motioned to approve Scott Walter’s Lot line adjustment, Councilor Sawyer 2nd the motion, the vote was unanimous.

5. Petitions, Remonstrations and Communications

6. Ordinances

6.1 Ordinance 2026-01 Compensation Ordinance

Purpose and Content

- The council reviewed the annual compensation ordinance (the standard ordinance they “have to do every year”).
- Kerry read out the compensation amounts for town positions, including:
 - Mayor: \$60
 - Council Member: \$60
 - (Kerry noted this basically covers the water bill.)
 - Planning & Zoning Chair: \$60
 - Treasurer: \$640
 - Clerk: \$715
 - Fire Chief: \$200
 - Snow Plow: \$200
 - Park Maintenance: \$250
 - Water Superintendent: \$650
 - Water Meter Reader: \$150
 - Road position also mentioned, but the text was hard to read on the printed copy.
- Kurt confirmed the ordinance reflects the same compensation as before
- Councilor Sawyer motioned to accept the ordinance and councilor Riggs 2nd the motion, the vote was unanimous.

7. Report of Officers - boards - committees

7.1 Water Department - Water Usage

- January Water Usage
 - Tyler Mendenhall reported that January water usage was 376,456 gallons.
- State Coordination Requirement
 - Tyler mentioned he would be on the phone with Rural Water next week.
 - He said the State of Utah is talking about requiring every water district to coordinate their water (i.e., some form of state-level coordination or oversight).
 - Tyler noted this could be a problem for the town, depending on how it’s implemented.
 - He stated he would know more next week and would bring back information on:
 - What exactly the state is proposing, and
 - Possible ways to mitigate or comply with the new requirement.

No motions or formal decisions were made during this brief water-usage update.

7.2 Fire Department

Mayor Barney stated:

- Since Jon is still acting as the town's fire department lead, with Tony helping him and another individual moving into town to assist,
- And because the fire department is running "fairly good" at present,

7.3 Road Department-

- For roads and related infrastructure:
 - Russ (if assigned) will likely:
 - Contact UDOT and Ensign Engineering about the sleeve under the highway (location, cost, timing).
 - Help coordinate road-related elements of the upcoming UDOT widening project.
- Council role assignment over roads will be formally discussed and potentially approved at the next meeting during the positions review.

7.4 Parks & Recreation-

7.4.a. 4th of July 205 Celebration

The council discussed the 4th of July festivities. They have decided to put Chris Mendenhall in charge of this year's event. She will be our contact for the America 250 celebration. She asked the council if it would be possible if she could use the snowflake lights, changing the bulbs, and making the red white and blue. The council agreed to let her use them with the assistance of Councilor Goble.

7.5 Grants-

7.5.a. Update of Ensign grant process

- Russ Riggs referenced Ensign Engineering's study, noting:
 - Ensign indicates the town's existing water tank is at or near capacity.
 - There are recommendations for additional water infrastructure, including a future tank and upgraded lines.
- Russ urged:
 - A work meeting with Ensign so they can explain their recommendations (pipe sizes, new tank, system design, etc.).
 - Possibly pausing new water hookups (moratorium) until the town is sure it has adequate capacity, based on Ensign's analysis.
- Riker (Ensign) is actively moving the water project forward in the CIB/Utah Project Portal process and will report back.
- The council intends to hold a work meeting with Ensign after more information is available.
- There is interest in leveraging grants (through CIB and possibly other programs) for the water project and related infrastructure.

7.5.b. Future grant project discussion

General Direction on Grants

- Mayor Barney emphasized that the town needs to be more proactive in pursuing grants:

- Mentioned that the town has already received some funds from local businesses and that this support should be matched by actively seeking outside grant money.
- Stated that whatever small grants are available (for parks, sidewalks, water, etc.) should be pursued consistently.
- Mayor Barney requested that at a future council meeting there be a specific agenda item for:
 - Discussion of grants and priorities.
 - Deciding which projects the town should target (e.g., sidewalks, park improvements, water infrastructure).
 - Assigning someone to regularly attend grant-related meetings and follow through on applications.

7.6 Planning & Zoning Commission

- Mayor Barney said P&Z hasn't met "for a long time."
- Councilor Sawyer suggested they "need 15" (minutes or a meeting), implying they should meet when there is real business.
- They agreed they shouldn't hold meetings just to have a meeting, but:
 - When ordinance changes or specific issues arise, P&Z should be convened.
- They did not schedule a specific Planning & Zoning meeting date.
- Understanding:
 - P&Z will be called when:
 - There are ordinance changes to review, or
 - A land use issue arises that cannot be handled as a simple council action (unlike Scott's lot line).

7.7 Cemetery

- Mayor Barney reported:
 - Prairie Dog Trapping:
 - Trappers were supposed to come that day to trap prairie dogs at the cemetery.
 - They could not trap because of the snow; trapping can't be done in those conditions.
 - They will come back and trap the prairie dogs when conditions allow.
 - Concerns from Residents:
 - Kerry mentioned Sister Evans (Jolene) is very worried that her husband's grave might be getting disturbed ("eaten") by prairie dogs.
 - Russ added that in the past, bodies in the old Panguitch cemetery were being disturbed by prairie dogs, underscoring that this is a real and serious concern, not just cosmetic.
- The plan is for the contracted person to trap and remove prairie dogs from the cemetery as soon as the weather permits.

8.1 Public Input

At the end of the meeting, Brett Burrows raised two public input items:

1. Status of Rebuilding the Dam

- Brett asked if anyone had heard anything about rebuilding the dam “down here by the old town.”
- Russ Riggs responded:
 - The paperwork has been submitted to the State of Utah.
 - The project is a long way off and likely won’t happen for many years.
 - Russ commented it may not occur within some current residents’ lifetimes, emphasizing how slow the process is.

2. Driveway / Concrete Between Ditch and Street

- Brett explained he has about 50 feet from the end of his driveway to the street, which is difficult to shovel in winter.
- He asked about the possibility of:
 - Pouring concrete between the ditch and the street so his full approach is hard-surfaced.
 - Leaving a gravel gap where the water line needs to go, if necessary.
- Council response (mainly Russ and Kerry):
 - Town streets were originally platted with 100-foot rights-of-way (fence line to fence line); that entire width belongs to the Town of Hatch.
 - Because it is town right-of-way, private owners cannot pour concrete or place permanent improvements there.
 - Granting a variance would:
 - Set a precedent and make it hard to deny future, similar requests.
 - Create fairness and enforcement problems (saying yes to one and no to another).
 - The right-of-way must stay available for future road and utility use:
 - If Brett poured concrete there, the snowplow could damage it, or the town might later need to dig it up for utilities.
- Brett noted that using a small plow on an ATV would eventually scrape away the dirt and create a hole between ditch and street, but the council maintained that private improvements in the town right-of-way are not allowed, and any maintenance or filling there would be up to him, not the town.

9. Unfinished or New Business

During Unfinished Business, the main topic was nuisance issues at a short-term rental (Airbnb/VRBO) across from Dennis’s house:

1. Noise, Fireworks, and Disturbance at the Rental

- Councilor Sawyer reported:
 - About 3-4 weeks earlier, renters at the vacation rental:
 - Set off fireworks.
 - Played very loud music late into the night.
 - More recently (Friday night), likely the same group returned:
 - Again, had music blasting, doors open, partying and drinking.
 - Kurt said he has no problem with them partying or drinking, but:
 - The noise level was unacceptable.

- Fireworks were being set off near Dennis’s property, which he felt was a safety concern.

2. Conditional Use Permit and Enforcement

- Councilor Sawyer stated:
 - The property operates under a conditional use permit.
 - The town should contact the listed contact person/owner for that rental and warn:
 - If the disturbances continue, the conditional use permit may be revoked.
- Councilor Riggs recommended a more formal enforcement path:
 - The town needs documented complaints to support any action.
 - If noise or fireworks occur again:
 - Call the Garfield County Sheriff’s Office and file an official noise/disturbance complaint.
 - Even if everything is quiet by the time deputies arrive, the call will be logged in dispatch, creating a record.
 - With multiple documented incidents, the town would have a stronger legal basis to:
 - Review or revoke the conditional use permit for the rental.

3. Sheriff / County Rules

- It was noted:
 - There may be a county guideline that after a set number of complaints, additional enforcement steps can be taken (including potential action on a business license or permit).
 - A similar instruction had been given in the past about RV camping complaints: call the sheriff so there is official documentation.

10. Adjournment

Mayor Barney motioned to adjourn and Councilor Sawyer 2nd the motion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm