



Hildale City Council Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 6:00 PM
320 East Newel Avenue, Hildale City, Utah 84784

Minutes

Welcome, Introduction and Preliminary Matters: Mayor Jessop

Mayor Jessop called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Roll Call of Council Attendees: City Recorder

PRESENT

Mayor Donia Jessop
Council Member Luke Merideth
Council Member JVar Dutson
Council Member Darlene Stubbs
Council Member Brigham Holm

ABSENT

Council Member Terrill Musser

Pledge of Allegiance: By Invitation of Mayor Jessop

Council Member Holm lead the pledge.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Mayor and Council Members

None

Special Recognitions:

1. City Council Community Recognition and Appreciation Award

Mayor Jessop stated that Council Member Merideth had chosen to recognize the Wooster family. She apologized that the official plaque was delayed but presented a temporary certificate.

Council Member Merideth read the recognition aloud:

The City of Hildale is proud to recognize the Wooster family for their outstanding commitment to service and a remarkable example of what it means to invest in a community. Whether assisting at local events, stepping in wherever help is needed, or quietly supporting neighbors behind the scenes, the Woosters have become a dependable force for good in our city. Their willingness to serve consistently, cheerfully, and without expectation or recognition has made a meaningful impact on countless residents. And what makes the Wooster family especially unique is the way they serve together. Their unity, generosity, and shared sense of purpose model the very best of community spirit. In a time when many families struggle to find margin just for connection, the Woosters have chosen to make service a family value. Blessing Hildale through both their teamwork and their example, we extend our sincere gratitude for their dedication, their heart for others, and the way they strengthen the fabric of our community simply by showing up with open hands and willing hearts.

Council Member Dutson thanked the family for setting a wonderful example of volunteerism for the community's children and grandchildren.

Public Presentations:

2. Presentation by Intermountain Health Board President John Cottam.

Mayor Jessop introduced John Cottam, Board Chair for St. George Regional Hospital, and Joelle Jacobson, Operations Director at the hospital.

Mr. Cottam and Ms. Jacobson presented an update on St. George Regional Hospital. Mr. Cottam explained the hospital's mission to be a model healthcare system and highlighted its non-profit status, which allows surplus funds to be reinvested into the system to broaden services, improve care, and serve all patients regardless of their ability to pay.

A video presentation showcased the hospital's services, including the Simply Birth center, inpatient rehabilitation, robotic surgeries, and the new surgical tower expansion. The video also highlighted recent awards, including being ranked #1 in the nation by Vizient and Fortune/PINC AI, and the hospital's Magnet recognition for nursing excellence.

Ms. Jacobson provided statistics for the hospital:

- 2,800 employees
- 835 physicians and APPs on medical staff
- Over 20,000 inpatient admissions annually
- Over 71,000 emergency department visits annually
- Licensed beds increasing to 334 with the opening of a new unit.
- Upcoming renovations are planned for the West Tower.
- Provided \$29 million in annual charity care.

Ms. Jacobson reviewed the Community Health Needs Assessment for 2026-2028, which will focus on:

- Behavioral Health (mental health, substance use, suicide)
- Social Drivers of Health (food insecurity, housing stability)
- Access to Care
- Prevention of Child Injury and Illness

She highlighted specific grants provided to the Hildale community:

- \$5,000 to Creek Valley Health for dental hygiene integration.
- \$24,000 to Creek Valley Health for a cancer program.
- \$193,000 toward a local housing initiative.

Ms. Jacobson concluded by emphasizing that St. George Regional is the community's hospital. Council Member Dutson requested that Intermountain Health consider expanding home health services for elderly residents in outlying communities like Hildale, as many prefer to receive care in their homes. Ms. Jacobson acknowledged the importance of the full continuum of care and stated she would bring the request to the home health operations manager.

Mayor Jessop thanked the presenters for their time and information.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: Council Members

3. City Council/Planning Commission Work Session minutes of 10/21/25

A discussion was held regarding the minutes from the October 21, 2025, joint work session with the Planning Commission. Council Member Dutson noted he was not present for the full meeting and would abstain. It was mentioned that a recording of the meeting is available online for public access.

Motion made by Council Member Holm to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2025, Seconded by Council Member Merideth.

Voting Yea: Council Member Merideth, Council Member Stubbs, Council Member Holm

Voting Abstaining: Council Member Dutson

Motion Carried

Oversight Items: 10 minutes - Mayor Jessop

4. Financial Report and Invoice Register approval

Kipp presented the financial report. He noted that some standard graphics, including cash balances, were not available at the time of the report but would be sent to the Council once compiled.

The primary concern raised was the low collection rate of property tax revenues, which significantly impacts the General Fund. While General Fund expenditures are on track, the lack of incoming revenue means expenditures could soon exceed the available budget.

Mayor Jessop stated she is working with Washington County on a plan to help citizens pay their outstanding taxes, noting the amount is material.

Council Member Dutson expressed significant concern, stating that approximately 90% of the city's budget relies on property taxes and that the city is reportedly a million dollars behind in collections.

City Attorney Shawn Guzman explained that Utah law dictates the process for tax sales after a property owner fails to pay for several years. He suggested the Council educate the public on the importance of paying taxes, explaining that failure to do so could necessitate a property tax increase for all residents. He also noted that the county can work with residents on payment plans.

Mayor Jessop confirmed she is working with Washington County to draft a letter to residents with delinquent taxes and to increase community education on the matter.

Council Member Stubbs inquired if the trend of non-payment was worsening. The consensus was that the trend is not improving. The unique situation in Hildale, where many properties are owned outright without mortgages and associated escrow accounts for taxes, was discussed as a potential contributing factor.

Kip acknowledged the financial audit burden, praising City Recorder Maxene Jessop's excellent work, particularly when he was ill for an extended period. He also reminded the council of the upcoming sewer fund loan repayment obligation, noting it creates additional pressure given the general fund revenue shortfalls.

Motion made by Council Member Dutson to pay the bills as funds are made available, Seconded by Council Member Stubbs.

Voting Yea: Council Member Merideth, Council Member Dutson, Council Member Stubbs, Council Member Holm

Motion Carried

5. City Admins report (Department reports included)

The department head reports are included in the Council's packet for review.

Public Hearing:

6. The purpose of this hearing is to provide information and receive public comment on the authorization of the Emergency Services Sales Tax at a rate of .33%. The imposition of this tax will include the Hildale City area.

Public hearing opened at 6:48 pm.

Attorney Guzman provided an overview of the enabling state legislation, which was recently passed. The statute allows municipalities to impose a sales tax of .33% of 1% specifically for fire, ambulance, and emergency medical services.

A tax rate up to 0.33% can be imposed by a majority vote of the City Council following a public hearing. A tax rate above 0.33% would require Council approval and subsequent voter approval in a public election.

The tax applies to general sales and would sunset in 10 years, at which point it would need to be renewed by the Council. The Council retains the authority to remove or adjust the tax at any time,

following the statutory requirements.

Jared Nicol expressed strong support for the emergency services tax, stating he has benefited from local emergency services many times and considers them top-notch and professional. He views 0.3% as a very small contribution and would personally support even a 1% rate if put to public vote, noting confidence that Chief Jesse and fire department personnel use resources efficiently.

Fire Chief Jesse Barlow voiced department support for the tax, explaining it provides opportunity for community visitors to contribute to services they receive. Currently, Hildale residents fund fire and EMS through property tax, but visitors and campers who receive services don't contribute. The sales tax would allow visitors who spend money locally to help pay for emergency services they might need. He emphasized that Hildale operates with a fully volunteer department and the additional revenue, while modest, represents a step toward better equipment and eventually compensating volunteers.

Hurricane Fire Chief Decker addressed the council and public, explaining that his district implemented this tax last month and that he was the architect of this legislation, which took three and a half years to develop. Chief Decker explained that this tax provides a funding mechanism to help offset EMS costs, particularly those related to tourism. He clarified that the tax is not imposed on groceries, uncooked food, gasoline, or heating oil, but applies to hotel rooms, RV parks, cooked food, and goods at hardware stores. Chief Decker noted that like Class C road funds, the revenue must be audited to show it was spent specifically on fire or EMS services.

Council Member Dutson asked for clarification on the tax rate, confirming it is 0.33 of 1%.

Hearing closed at 6:55 pm

Appointments to Boards or Commissions:

Unfinished Council Business:

New Council Business:

7. Consideration, discussion and possible approval of the Emergency Service Tax at a rate of .33%.

Motion made by Council Member Dutson to approve ordinance 2025-09 enacting an emergency services local option sales tax pursuant to Utah Code Title 59, Chapter 12, part 24, 0.33 of 1%, Seconded by Council Member Stubbs.

Voting Yea: Council Member Merideth, Council Member Dutson, Council Member Stubbs, Council Member Holm

Motion Carried

Council Member Merideth inquired about optimizing sales tax collection through business licensing enforcement, particularly for short-term rentals. Mayor Jessop confirmed that City Recorder Lisa works on business licensing and they are exploring an automated program to track business licenses.

8. Consideration, discussion and possible approval of Ordinance 2025-08 concerning Hildale City's Privacy Policy.

Mayor Jessop presented Ordinance 2025-08 concerning Hildale City's data privacy policy, explaining this is required for all cities in Utah. The ordinance establishes the Hildale City Data Privacy Program, designates chief administrative and authorized records officers, requires privacy training, prepares website data privacy notice, endorses Utah's data privacy policy, and completes an internal data privacy program report. The ordinance designates the city recorder as the Administrative Records Officer (ARO) and requires compliance with the Utah Government Data Privacy Act (GDPA) and Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA).

Attorney Guzman suggested changes of removing personal names referring only to positions (mayor and city recorder) to avoid future amendments when personnel change. .

Motion made by Council Member Dutson to adopt Ordinance Number 2025-08 to initiate the establishment of the Hildale City Data Privacy Program with the recommended changes to remove personal names, Seconded by Council Member Stubbs.

Voting Yea: Council Member Merideth, Council Member Dutson, Council Member Stubbs, Council Member Holm

Motion Carried

Public Comments: 3 minutes each - Discretion of Mayor Jessop

Jared Nicol - addressed the council regarding the meeting minutes from October 21st. He referenced Utah Code 52-4-203, stating that meeting minutes should include the date, time, and place of the meeting, names of members present and absent, the substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided, and identification of speakers. Nicol expressed concern that the previous meeting's minutes did not adequately reflect all discussions that occurred during the meeting. He also noted requirements for electronic information presented at public meetings to be provided to the public body and made available to the public.

Council Comments: For items not on the agenda (10 minutes total)

Council Member Stubbs thanked Mayor Jessop for organizing the tree lighting event, noting it was successful in bringing the community together. She reported on the Angel Flight event at the airport, highlighting community support from fire and police departments, both mayors, city council members from both sides of the state line, and principals from Water Canyon Elementary and Cottonwood Elementary with attendance between 500-600 people. This marked the first joint event between elementary schools from both sides of the state line. She also thanked Council Member Dutson for his continued support of the Turkey Trot, which has been running for six years.

Council Member Dutson expressed gratitude for community events, particularly the Angel Flight which brought back childhood memories of Christmas celebrations. He thanked Council Member Merideth for organizing the turkey giveaway, emphasizing the community blessing it provides. Dutson also provided a brief update on the Maxwell Park project, noting progress is continuing.

Council Member Holm noted this was his last meeting as a council member and expressed honor in serving the community. He reported on disc golf installation at Cottonwood Park through UEP, noting approximately 50 people per day are using the facility with growing interest. Local businesses have sponsored individual holes. Holm indicated this pilot project is generating community engagement for the planned disc golf course at Maxwell Park.

Mayor Jessop noted the Angel Flight event had been planned for 8-10 months and emphasized the positive community response. She thanked Council Member Holm for his service, particularly his work on planning and zoning and city council during challenging times. She recognized Holm's continuation of disc golf initiatives that began with Jared Nicol's advocacy.

Council Member Stubbs thanked Council Member Holm for his assistance with Hildale City Cleanup Day, noting his crew's participation in cleaning Utah Avenue and the positive community response. She expressed gratitude for his peaceful presence and contributions to the council.

Council Member Merideth thanked Mayor Jessop for organizing recent community events and Council Member Holm for his service, particularly noting Holm's calming influence during difficult council decisions.

Council Member Dutson addressed the Council regarding the infant cemetery, expressing concern about ongoing damage to fencing and requesting assistance in coordinating with the UEP (United Effort Plan) to install security fencing across the front of the cemetery. He noted issues with livestock and animals accessing the area and uncertainty regarding current ownership of the property.

Mayor Jessop acknowledged this could potentially be considered as a future city project.

Calendar of Upcoming Events: 5 minutes - Mayor Jessop

9. City Council Calendar

Mayor Jessop went over the events on the calendar in the packet.

Executive Session: Request a closed meeting to discuss litigation, security, property acquisition or sale or the character and professional competence or physical or mental health of an individual.

Motion made by Council Member Dutson to enter into executive session for discussion of litigation, security, property acquisition or sale, character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual, Seconded by Council Member Stubbs.

Attorney Guzman clarified that the executive session would specifically address litigation and matters of character and professional competence.

Voting Yea: Council Member Merideth, Council Member Dutson, Council Member Stubbs, Council Member Holm

Motion Carried

Adjournment: Mayor Jessop

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Minutes were approved at the City Council Meeting on January 07, 20026.



Maxene Jessop, City Recorder

