

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daggett called the Work Session of the Flagstaff City Council held May 27, 2025, to order at 3:02 p.m.

NOTICE OF OPTION TO RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.02, notice is hereby given to the members of the City Council and to the general public that, at this work session, the City Council may vote to go into executive session, which will not be open to the public, for discussion and consultation with the City's attorneys for legal advice on any item listed on the following agenda, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).

2. ROLL CALL

NOTE: One or more Councilmembers may be in attendance through other technological means.

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

MAYOR DAGGETT
VICE MAYOR SWEET
COUNCILMEMBER ASLAN
COUNCILMEMBER GARCIA
COUNCILMEMBER HOUSE
COUNCILMEMBER MATTHEWS
COUNCILMEMBER SPENCE

Others present: City Manager Greg Clifton, City Attorney Sterling Solomon

3. Pledge of Allegiance, Mission Statement, and Land Acknowledgement

The Council and audience recited the pledge of allegiance, Councilmember Garcia read the Mission Statement of the City of Flagstaff, and Councilmember Matthews read the Land Acknowledgement.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Flagstaff is to protect and enhance the quality of life for all.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Flagstaff City Council humbly acknowledges the ancestral homelands of this area's Indigenous nations and original stewards. These lands, still inhabited by Native descendants, border mountains sacred to Indigenous peoples. We honor them, their legacies, their traditions, and their continued contributions. We celebrate their past, present, and future generations who will forever know this place as home.

4. Open Call to the Public

Open Call to the Public enables the public to address the Council about an item that is not on the prepared agenda. Comments relating to items that are on the agenda will be taken at the time that the item is discussed. Open Call to the Public appears on the agenda twice, at the beginning and at the end. The total time allotted for the first Open Call to the Public is 30 minutes; any additional comments will be held until the second Open Call to the Public.

If you wish to address the Council in person at today's meeting, please complete a comment card and submit it to the recording clerk as soon as possible. Your name will be called when it is your turn to speak. You may address the Council up to three times throughout the meeting, including comments made during Open Call to the Public and Public Comment. Please limit your remarks to three minutes per item to allow everyone an opportunity to speak. At the discretion of the Chair, ten or more persons present at the meeting and wishing to speak may appoint a representative who may have no more than fifteen minutes to speak.

Dapper Dre addressed Council and discussed several transportation issues. He acknowledged the 30-mph speed limit on Butler but noted the lack of other visible improvements. He emphasized the need to extend sidewalks and highlighted the car-centric nature of the community. Mr. Dre called for making difficult decisions that prioritize alternatives to cars, such as closing roads for First Friday events, and urged for proactive messaging that promotes other modes of transportation over car use.

Steven Puhr addressed Council and stated he requested information again about the scope of work for company quarterly reviews and oversight under the charter. He pointed out that quarterly reviews are only submitted to Management Services Division, reducing transparency for the community. He stated the required oversight is not being effectively carried out. He referenced a similar situation in California where a city declared bankruptcy and emphasized the need to avoid the same outcome locally.

John McCullough addressed Council requesting a repair of a streetlight on W. Phoenix Ave.

5. Review of Draft Agenda for the June 3, 2025 City Council Meeting

Citizens wishing to speak on agenda items not specifically called out by the City Council may submit a speaker card for their items of interest to the recording clerk.

Councilmember House stated the Commission on Diversity Awareness will have proclamations for June coming forward soon.

Kelly and Rona Mortensen and William and Robin Charles submitted written comments in opposition to the Regular Agenda item 11E on the Draft Agenda for June 3, 2025.

6. May Work Anniversaries

Senior Deputy City Manager Shannon Anderson highlighted those employees who have work anniversaries in May.

Councilmember Garcia congratulated Louis Lucero on 25 years and spoke of knowing each other from a young age. He highlighted everyone in the Streets department for their dedication to service.

7. City Manager Report

City Manager Greg Clifton briefly reviewed his report including highlights from the recent Sustainability Leadership community Partner Award ceremony where Emily Melhorn was awarded. He provided a brief overview of the Human Resources and Risk Management construction and personnel updates. Mr. Clifton also highlighted Fire Captain Neil Chapman's recent trip to Washington for the House Committee on Natural Resources and provided a video of his testimony.

Councilmember Matthews stated she was interested to learn that California builders are building with fire resistant materials. She stated her research did not indicate a higher cost and saw that Sedona adopted an international building code. She asked if the City has adopted the international codes. Mr. Chapman stated the city adopted the code in 2008 and customized it for the community, he added that there were updates to adopt for the 2024 code.

8. Astronomy Discovery Center at Lowell Observatory Update

Economic Vitality Director Heidi Hansen introduced Amanda Bosh, Executive Director from Lowell Observatory, who provided a PowerPoint presentation of pictures from Lowell Observatory along with the Mission of the Observatory and some historical pictures.

INFINITE WONDERS: THE ASTRONOMY DISCOVERY CENTER AT LOWELL OBSERVATORY

Councilmember House reflected on the journey of establishing a science center in Flagstaff, expressing pride in seeing Lowell Observatory quickly recognized as one of the nation's top science centers. She highlighted the connection to the spirit of discovery, emphasizing how discovery is a personal experience, and shared excitement about the impact of the new kids' area on the community.

Councilmember Aslan thanked Ms. Bosh and the previous executive director for their efforts, reaffirming the belief in the dark skies' initiative and its economic benefits through the Observatory. He recalled the groundbreaking ceremony and expressed concern after speaking with a trustee about the difficult times science center's face. He raised questions about sustaining fundraising efforts, especially with federal funding uncertainties. Ms. Bosh acknowledged the challenges at the federal level, noting volatility and potential funding cuts that affect critical research. She explained that the center focuses on both discovery and sharing of science and was heavily dependent on federal research funds. These challenges are not unique to the Observatory but affect universities as well. She emphasized the need for the country to decide what it values and highlighted their ongoing efforts to navigate these difficulties. Ms. Bosh shared plans to build out a skylight terrace on the roof, a popular spot for sunset gatherings. This space will also be used for astronomy presentations and events, enhancing community engagement.

Vice Mayor Sweet expressed enthusiasm about spending time at the Observatory at sunset, calling it a valuable community asset. She praised the center's impact on downtown business and noted that visitors often leave Flagstaff with something from the center, celebrating its role in putting the city on the map.

Councilmember Garcia thanked Ms. Bosh for the presentation and acknowledged the Observatory as one of Flagstaff's key industries that shaped the local mindset and workforce. He credited Lowell Observatory as a crucial factor in the city's identity as a hub for free thinkers.

Ms. Hansen pointed out that despite the driest December in a long time, the Discovery Center helped prevent a significant drop in visitors.

Mayor Daggett offered congratulations and gratitude, praising the center's interactive experiences. She asked about passes and discounted rates for schoolchildren. Ms. Bosh explained that special rates exist for school groups, supported by a generous donor for those who cannot afford them. The center also participates in the statewide Culture Pass program to ensure broad accessibility, including for those receiving federal assistance. She added that membership at Lowell Observatory grants access to other science centers nationwide.

Councilmember Spence reminded the community about the upcoming community discussion regarding Land Accessibility and Suitability Study at the Observatory and encouraged attendance.

9. Monsoon Preparations and Post-Wildfire Flooding Update

Public Works Director Scott Overton, Water Services Section Director Ed Schenk, Brian Kilmowski from the National Weather Service for Flagstaff, Emergency Program Manager Daniel Kelley, Joe Loverich with JE Fuller, Consulting Engineer from Peak Engineering Julie Leid, and Public Affairs

Director Sarah Langley provided a PowerPoint presentation that covered the following:

MONSOON FLOOD SEASON PREPARATIONS
OBJECTIVES TONIGHT
NWS FLAGSTAFF MONSOON OUTLOOK 2025
SUPPORTING AND SUMMARY INFORMATION
FLAGSTAFF MONSOON PREPARATIONS
CLIMATE PREDICTION CENTER OUTLOOKS

Councilmember House asked if warmer and wetter conditions mean the area will experience atypical humidity. Mr. Klimowski confirmed that while it is more common in the south, it could affect the local area as well.

Councilmember House also raised concerns about potential impacts from federal funding changes on weather prediction reliability. Mr. Klimowski responded that their forecasting tools have not been significantly affected by funding cuts and that technological advancements continue to improve their capabilities.

SPRUCE WASH
OVERALL MAP
SPRUCE WASH SCHEDULE
SUITE OF PROJECTS
GRANDVIEW DRIVE PROJECT

Councilmember Aslan asked what type of storm would overwhelm the structure. Ms. Leid responded that a storm producing two inches of rain in 45 minutes--approximately a 25-year event--would exceed the structure's capacity.

THE WEDGE DETENTION BASIN
LINDA VISTA CROSSING
LINDA VISTA TO CEDAR CHANNEL
CEDAR AVENUE CROSSING
ARROYO SECO TO DORTHA CHANNEL
ARROYO SECO DRIVE INLET
KILIP BASINS INLET
KILIP BASINS OUTLET

Councilmember Spence inquired about the water capacity of the Killip basins, and Ms. Leid responded that they hold 8 acre-feet.

Councilmember House raised concerns about the Fourth Street construction project, asking how its timing aligns with other efforts and how traffic diversions are being managed, particularly regarding increased use of neighborhood side streets and related speed issues. Ms. Leid explained that while ADOT is leading much of the planning, the city is coordinating closely with its traffic team to manage detours. Law enforcement is monitoring traffic flow, and strategies can be deployed to address cut-through traffic as behavioral patterns emerge.

Mayor Daggett asked if Cedar Avenue is closed entirely from the west to Fourth Street. Ms. Leid clarified that only the Spruce Wash crossing is closed and alternate routes like Grandview are available. She noted that business signage is in development to help affected local businesses. Mayor Daggett emphasized supporting businesses on Cedar during this disruptive period and thanked staff for minimizing closures.

Councilmember House also referenced a phone number for residents to report issues, and Mr. Schenk confirmed the call center number is 928-213-2102.

INTERIM CONDITIONS MAPS
STATE OF THE WATERSHED
MEET IN THE STREETS

Councilmember Matthews emphasized the need for broader outreach beyond social media to inform residents affected by flooding. Ms. Leid mentioned efforts such as a weekly e-newsletter, potential public releases, and door hangers. Ms. Langley added that a news release, social media, and Nextdoor would also be used.

Councilmember Aslan expressed interest in being onsite during the first flooding event and asked if councilmembers could be notified when it happens. Mr. Scott confirmed there are existing emergency protocols and policy briefings, and that coordination would be possible for onsite visits, footage, or VIP delegations, stressing the importance of organized efforts. Councilmember Aslan reiterated interest in being present and looked forward to working out the logistics.

SANDBAG GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

SCHULTZ CREEK

COMPLETELY MITIGATED

SCHULTZ FLOOD BASINS

SCHULTZ CHANNEL STABILIZATION

SCHULTZ CREEK LONG TERM MITIGATION

2025 STORMWATER CONVEYANCE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

2025 YTD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OPEN CHANNELS

STORM WATER CONVEYANCE PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

2025-2026 DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS

2025 MONSOON SEASON PREPARATIONS

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

EARLY ALERT NETWORK

PURCHASE FLOOD INSURANCE

Mayor Daggett asked why Flagstaff residents receive a discount. Mr. Schneck explained that it is due to the Community Rating System program, which rewards communities that exceed minimum standards for flood mitigation. Flagstaff is a Class 5 community, and in this system, a lower-class number is better. As a result, residents receive a 25% discount on flood insurance.

FLOOD PREVENTION GRANTS

STATE OF THE SCIENCE

QUESTIONS?

Mayor Daggett expressed relief and appreciation for the progress made, noting that this presentation was one of the least stressful compared to past situations when properties were under threat. She praised the significant work, coordination, and planning that have gone into addressing the issue.

Mr. Schneck echoed the sentiment, commending the strong teamwork among individuals and agencies, and added hope for small monsoon events to help test the improvements.

Mayor Daggett stated that water in designated channels is a beautiful thing.

10. Open Call to the Public

None

11. Informational Items To/From Mayor, Council, and City Manager; future agenda item requests

Vice Mayor Sweet shared that the city sponsored Movies on the Square and highlighted that the Council has access to a free booth at three of the events. Coordination will be needed with the City Manager to decide which dates to select for city representation.

Councilmember House spoke of the recent tourism volunteer day and noted the upcoming Crisis Center event. She reminded everyone about the Montalvo event at the Aquaplex to discuss uses for the center and highlighted two additional events: a flag ceremony for engineer Chris Thomas and the

E-Drive event in the afternoon.

Councilmember Spence stated he recently attended a listening session in town focused on services for blind individuals. He noted that a Tucson-based organization offers rehabilitation services for the blind in Arizona. He also emphasized the upcoming E-Drive ride-and-drive electric vehicle event.

Councilmember Aslan described his positive experience joining the Public Works department for a lunch event and participating in the tourism volunteer service day, which included a pizza party.

Councilmember Garcia spoke about the Market of Dreams, encouraging its use for events and workshops and noting that the county is offering support. He expressed interest in supporting it through the Council initiative fund when renewed. He promoted the Montavlo Center event and called on Sunnyside residents to engage. He also highlighted the Museum of Northern Arizona's "Shifting Lightzone" exhibit, which showcases the region's unique climate zones, and encouraged support for local arts and culture.

Councilmember Matthews expressed concern over the city's budget process, stating that despite staff efforts, two declared emergencies are not receiving the focused attention they deserve. She called for a special budget session to review what departments requested versus what was approved, noting that councilmembers often only see the final outcome and are not involved enough in the decision-making process. She emphasized the importance of transparency and council involvement.

12. Adjournment

The meeting of the Flagstaff City Council held May 27, 2025, adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK