Town of Wickenburg

MINUTES

WICKENBURG COMMON COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MEETING
Monday, February 10, 2025 - 2:00 P.M.
1980 W. Wickenburg Way – Police Department Training Room
WICKENBURG, ARIZONA 85390

A. **CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Bratcher called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM

B. **ROLL CALL**

Present:	Mayor BG Bratcher
	Vice Mayor Brian Jones
	Councilmember Kristy Bedoian
	Councilmember Shawn Clark
	Councilmember Margaret Nyberg
	Councilmember Rebecca Rovey
	Councilmember Art Rubash
Staff Present:	Troy Smith, Interim Town Manager
	Trish Stuhan, Town Attorney
	Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager/Economic Development
	Steve Boyle, Community Development Director
	Amy Brown, Town Clerk
	Les Brown, Police Chief
	Robert Martinez, Finance Director
	Tarah Mayerhofer, Human Resources Director
	Ed Temerowski, Fire Chief
	Herschel Workman, Public Works Director

C. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Presentation, Discussion, and Direction Between the Common Council and Town Staff Regarding Council Priorities and Planning for the Town of Wickenburg in FY 2025/26. Presentations may include discussion of the following: Capital Improvement Projects, Parks Master Plan, Parks and Open Space, Community Center, Recreation Programs, Revenue Sources, Public Safety, Economic Development, Code Compliance, Annexation, Public Utilities, Technology, Citizen Communication, Special Events and Community Quality of Life. The purpose of the meeting is for staff to present information to the Council to assist in formulating town priorities and planning.

Interim Town Manager Troy Smith stated that he really has two roles for this meeting, one as the Interim Town Manager and the other as the retreat facilitator. He brought a cowboy hat for when he has to step in the role of the facilitator to move the meeting along or to put an item aside for discussion at a later date.

Mayor Bratcher started the meeting by talking about teamwork with each other, with staff and also with the residents. Her hope today is for this to be a brainstorming meeting.

Robert Martinez, Finance Director, started with a brief financial update. The budget timeline is to bring the budget to the Council for a work session in April, the tentative budget in May and the final budget in June. He provided a revenue summary for the first six months of FY 2024-25:

Period Ending December 2024							
	Actual YTD FY 2020-21	Actual YTD FY 2021-22	Actual YTD FY 2022-23	Actual YTD FY 2023-24	Actual YTD FY 2024-25	Budget FY 2024-25	%
Property Tax	337,552	337,552	337,552	445,588	369,433	630,000	58.64%
Local Sales Tax	4,155,494	4,155,494	4,155,494	7,851,520	4,992,281	9,500,000	52.55%
State Shared Revenues	1,637,276	1,637,276	1,637,276	2,744,231	1,931,155	3,314,256	58.27%
IGA's & Contributions	55,706	55,706	55,706	171,904	226,783	1,364,411	16.62%
Franchises	154,729	154,729	154,729	233,439	181,419	309,207	58.67%
Admin Fees	835,419	835,419	835,419	916,490	453,849	1,361,546	33.33%
Police & Court	118,755	118,755	118,755	137,093	157,756	175,639	89.82%
Parks, Rec & Facilities	50,029	50,029	50,029	118,840	58,575	167,247	35.02%
Comm Dev Permits & Fees	439,960	439,960	439,960	525,014	245,168	510,000	48.07%
Other Revenues	469,267	469,267	469,267	1,043,547	1,059,006	1,043,668	101.47%
Transfers In/Out	(1,047,872)	(1,047,872)	(1,047,872)	(1,298,903)	(1,398,902)	(1,398,902)	100.00%
Total	$7,206,315	$7,206,315	$7,206,315	$12,888,763	$8,276,523	$16,977,072	48.75%

Next is a chart specific to the sales tax/Transaction Privilege Tax (TPT) numbers for July – December comparing the current year with the past two years.

July Dec	2022 2022	2023 2023	2024 2024	% Chg Prior Yr	$ Chg Prior Yr
Construction	$ 1,439,422.66	$ 2,738,862.84	$ 2,335,188.76	-14.74%	$ (403,674.08)
Communications, Utilities & Transporting	$ 219,731.29	$ 244,979.30	$ 266,385.99	8.74%	$ 21,406.69
Retail Trade	$ 1,931,553.53	$ 1,971,118.24	$ 1,942,598.39	-1.45%	$ (28,519.85)
Restaurants & Bars	$ 277,492.93	$ 291,747.69	$ 312,944.17	7.27%	$ 21,196.48
Real Estate, Rental & Leases	$ 234,356.06	$ 286,287.13	$ 291,722.22	1.90%	$ 5,435.09
Transient Lodging, Arts & Entertainment	$ 228,637.70	$ 248,040.91	$ 273,660.86	10.33%	$ 25,619.95
Services	$ 13,189.27	$ 16,364.28	$ 16,509.69	0.89%	$ 145.41
Others	$ 879.63	$ 917.46	$ 661.31	-27.92%	$ (256.15)
TOTAL	$ 4,345,263.07	$ 5,798,317.85	$ 5,439,671.39	-6.19%	$ (358,646.46)

There are a few notes on the sales tax regarding potential impacts:

- Effective January 1, 2025, property owners should no longer collect and remit any TPT on income from long-term lodging which are stays of 30 days or more. This was supposed to be off-set by an increase in the income taxes provided to the cities and towns.
- HCR2021 is progressing through the Legislature to eliminate all food and grocery tax that will cut between $900,000 to $1 million from the town budget.

The General Fund had an ending fund balance of $27 million for FY2024. The overall growth has been 118% in the last five years. $4.35 million of the fund balance is reserved or restricted per policy at a minimum as the General Fund reserve will be maintained in an amount not less than 15%. $2.9 million is committed to Operational and Council Contingencies at a minimum as contingency will be established for all funds of at least 10%. The projected fund balance for FY2026 is $19.75 million.

Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager, then introduced the current Council Strategic Plan to provide an update on the projects.

- <u>Develop and Adopt a Long-term Strategic Financial Plan for Capital Projects</u> - Started in FY24-25 and will be implemented in FY 2025-26. There is currently a 3-year Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) list. Council requested a 5-year CIP list. The one hold-up for that is that staff has to know how much is available each year to have an idea what will fit into any year.
- <u>Evaluate Enterprise Resource Program (ERP)</u> – This will be to change the program for the town to be more inclusive of all departments needs. This will be a future project.
- <u>Implement Employee Engagement and Development Survey</u> – This is ongoing with action plans developed with each department to help with employee engagement.
- <u>Evaluate Internal Fees and Cost Recovery Policies</u> – This is being tracked for cost recovery and will be a future report.
- <u>Conduct Transportation and Transit Plan</u> – This is for a circulation plan. Move back a year or two.
- <u>Conduct a Facilities Master Plan</u> – This was done on a small scale with SiteLogic to list the replacement needs for the buildings. Get a sample report to the Council.
- <u>Implement Council direction on the Community Center</u> – Discussion later this meeting.
- <u>Implement Water and Wastewater Master Plan (Year 2) Recommendations</u> – The current project is the South Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion that is funded by a Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) loan and will have the bid opening on March 6.
- <u>Implement Water and Wastewater Master Plan (Year 3) Recommendations</u> – There are ten years of projects for water and wastewater set. There were five years of rate increases that started for System 1 on July 1, 2024. The WIFA

loans created debt, so the rates have to increase to cover the costs of the projects that have to be completed. Council asked for a report on the rates and usage after July, which will probably be available in September to review the rates.

Council took at break at 3:15 PM.

Council reconvened the meeting at 3:25 PM.

- Evaluate Hangar and Tie Down Opportunities – This was a discussion for later in the meeting.
- Evaluate Development Impact Fees – In order to have impact fees, the town will have to hire a consultant for a study that will list the projects that the funds can be spent on. Some communities add an additional $20,000 for any new build in fees to pay for new growth. The Council in the past stopped collecting the impact fees because they thought it would inhibit growth and the Wickenburg Ranch development agreement doesn't allow impact fees to be charged for that community. The Council instead has connection fees for water and sewer as well as construction sales tax for the roads.
- Strategic Annexation to manager Urban Pressure and Economic Opportunities – The annexation strategy was sent to the Council for feedback recently.
- Develop Community Engagement Volunteer Program – There is an informal program right now by department. This idea was a more formal program to recruit volunteers with a volunteer coordinator. It was stated that it is really hard to get volunteers right now. Either take off plan or discuss at a later date. There is still the neighborhood engagement with Make a Difference Day that will be the second weekend in April this year after Dump Days. Neighborhood Watch program was of interest with the town's help.
- Seek Partnerships to Increase Recreational Programming – The Winter/Spring recreational program included several new partners for programs, so this is ongoing.
- Zoning Code Update – There was a written update given to the Council on Thursday.
- Develop and Implement Wayfinding Plan – There is a committee set up to review this.
- Develop Economic Development Web Portal – A basic framework for this portal was presented to the Economic Development and Transportation Committee at their last meeting.
- Conduct Economic Development Strategic Plan – There are elements of this in the General Plan.
- Attract and Support the Growth of Light Industrial Businesses – This is in progress and ongoing.
- Council also asked to create more events and use the rodeo grounds and Community Center more.

The Parks and Trails Master Plan was approved by the Council in October 2024. This plan included maintenance items, enhancements to current parks and the development of new parks. The maintenance list includes the following:

EXISTING PARKS		ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME					
FISCAL YEARS	TOTAL BUDGET	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030+
Barbara Brown Park	$26,500	$3,500	$23,000				
Boetto Park	$9,100	$4,000	$5,100				
Maguire Park	$26,000	$5,000	$9,000	$12,000			
Coffinger Park	$200,000	$25,000	$65,000	$80,000	$30,000		
Sunset Park	$390,000	$30,000	$140,000	$60,000	$60,000		$100,000
Estimated Budget	**$651,600**	**$67,500**	**$242,100**	**$152,000**	**$90,000**	**$-**	**$100,000**

The new park opportunities include the following ideas and costs:

NEW PARKS		ESTIMATED TIMEFRAME													
FISCAL YEARS	TOTAL BUDGET	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038
Hassayampa Preserve (new park)	$1,200,000		$400,000		$800,000										
Kerkes Park (Sports Fields)	$2,500,000		$1,250,000	$1,250,000											
Constellation Park New Trailhead	$1,300,000			$600,000			$200,000	$500,000							
Cassandro Wash Park (new park)	$1,500,000				$750,000	$750,000									
Coffinger Recreation Center/Pool	$14,500,000					$2,500,000	$12,000,000								
Sunset Park (New Amenities)	$7,500,000							$2,500,000	$2,500,000	$2,500,000					
Constallation Park RV Park	$1,000,000										$500,000	$500,000			
Sunset Park South (new park)	$13,500,000												$4,500,000	$4,500,000	$4,500,000
Estimated Budget	**$43,000,000**	**$-**	**$1,650,000**	**$1,850,000**	**$1,550,000**	**$3,250,000**	**$12,200,000**	**$3,000,000**	**$2,500,000**	**$2,500,000**	**$500,000**	**$500,000**	**$4,500,000**	**$4,500,000**	**$4,500,000**

Interim Town Manager Smith provided the Council with dots to put on their top three priority projects. After some discussion the following three came to the front:

- ✓ Kerkes Park – This is the least expensive that can be done with a use agreement with the school. There are issues including flood plain and street issues. In addition, this has to be an agreement with the school district, Hassayampa River Preserve and Simpson Ranch. In addition, it is making improvements on property that the town doesn't own, so the gift clause would need to be reviewed.
- ✓ Sunset Park- This would be for $7.3 million. The issue is that item one is only a practice field, so it is not large enough to move football onto it for them to play. They would like to see bathrooms for the pickleball. The Wickenburg Christian Academy is not going to be able to have the football team they wanted yet, but they were told that there needs to be engineered grading and drainage plans to start with and they were going to work on those. The thought is to maximize the use and try to not have football on the baseball fields.

- ✓ Sunrise Park – This is a $14 million project with it costing $650,000 per entrance into the property. We can start by applying for grants for the design and budget, but this is a long-term project.

The maintenance issues were discussed with Director Workman stating that they have dealt with many of the safety issues and other small fixes. They will look at what they can fix in a more condensed timeline. It is less expensive to do now than to wait a few years. He figured with the Barbara Brown Park that he can put in a shade and table for about $5,000, since that isn’t used much.

Coffinger Park was discussed with the gopher issue, so the grass area can’t be used for sports. The town did hire an outside company to exterminate them, but they weren’t consistent, so the town is now doing it themselves at a lower cost, but it is time-consuming. The thought was to move t-ball to the dirt infield area as the gophers aren’t in that area. They just need a dugout or bench for them as that was taken out. In addition, the town does need to look at any safety issue as Coffinger Park was deemed unrentable due to safety concerns.

For right now the priorities are as follows:

- ✓ Coffinger Park – See if t-ball can play on the dirt infield
- ✓ Sunset Park – Build field 3, which will mean moving the dog park, so item 6 will also have to be completed.
- ✓ Sunset Park – Item #2, the extension of the field to make it usable for football was not feasible right now due to it cutting too much parking out at the park.
- ✓ Sunset Park – Extend field A to be able to be a regulation field for soccer. There will need to be some dirt work done as there is a drop off. A licensed engineer would need to complete stamped plans, and then local licensed contractors can donate time to complete the work, to save money.

Council took at break at 5:09 PM.

Council reconvened the meeting at 5:14 PM.

The next item of discussion was the Community Center. This was built in the early 1970’s, so it is 54 years old, with 10,000 square feet under the roof on 4 acres of land. It can fit about 380 people with round tables and 400 with rectangular tables in the main room. Interim Town Manager Troy Smith asked the Council’s thoughts on the uses that are important to them and the residents they have talked to for the property. The Council gave the following responses:

- Lifeline of the town in the Downtown
- Gathering Place
- Celebration of Life
- Non-profits use – Guys Who Grill
- Concerts

- Gun Show, Gem and Mineral Show
- Focal Point
- Event Center for private events
- Public Good for Quality of Life

This building has been running at a deficit of about $100,000 for years. It was requested to get more events into the building. The question has been whether to have a conference center or community center. He is hearing the desire is not to have a hotel on the property, so that will be removed from the website.

Renovation of the building will cost $6.5 - 7 million, with minor updates for ADA compliance, fire sprinklers, and cosmetic improvements. New construction is estimated to cost $8.7 – 9.5 million for an expanded, versatile 11,000 square foot facility that will meet the priorities established in the survey. Right now, there is wasted space with two kitchens, when only one is needed, and a very large stage where only part of it is used. There can be a small rehabilitation of $2 million to extend the useful life of the building. The town can bring in consultants to talk about debt services including bonds and loans. The General Fund has to cover all costs for police, fire, parks and roads, so there is a lot of need with limited funds.

Council discussed the $2 million option to deal with some structural and functional issues only. There will be another meeting at a future date to go over the priorities and talk about revenue sources.

Items that were placed on hold for future discussion include the following:

- ADOT – Town Road Maintenance and Ownership
- Sewer Fund Options – General Fund Subsidies, Fund Balance and Rates
- Development Impact Fees
- Develop a Community Volunteer Program

2. Presentation, Discussion and Direction Between the Common Council and Town Staff Regarding Council Orientation which may include discussion regarding Open Meeting Law, Council-Manager Form of Government, Code of Ethics, Council Policies, Rules of Conduct at Town Council meetings, Roberts Rules of Order and Expectations

   This item was not discussed due to lack of time.

D. **EXECUTIVE SESSION -** (Council May Vote to Go Into Executive Session Pursuant to A.R.S §38-431.03(A)(3) to Receive Legal Advice from the Town Attorney on Any of the Above Agenda Items.)

E. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY Councilmember Kristy Bedoian to adjourn at approximately 6:02 PM
SECONDED BY Councilmember Rebecca Rovey
VOTE: 7 – 0 (Yes – Mayor Bratcher, Vice Mayor Jones, Councilmembers Bedoian, Clark, Nyberg, Rovey, and Rubash)

BG Bratcher, Mayor

ATTEST:

Amy Brown, Town Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I, Amy Brown, the duly appointed and qualified Town Clerk of the Town of Wickenburg, do hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the special meeting of the Town Council of Wickenburg, Arizona held on February 10, 2025. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Amy Brown, MMC
Town Clerk