



MINUTES

WICKENBURG COMMON COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MEETING

**Monday, June 16, 2025 – Immediately Following the Regular Meeting
155 N. TEGNER - COUNCIL CHAMBERS
WICKENBURG, ARIZONA 85390**

A. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Bratcher called the meeting to order at 6:27 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, 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. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion and Direction Regarding the Potential Transition of Sanitation Services to Waste Management

Herschel Workman, Public Works Director, stated that during the FY26 budget work session held on April 7th, Council gave staff direction to look at alternatives related to sanitation and recycling operations. Curbside Recycling began in 2011 and initially generated modest revenue, but since 2020 there has been considerable cost to recycling due to global market changes. In 2023, Council eliminated the \$1.50 per month recycling fee and capped recycling losses at \$25,000 per year. The current cap allows recycling for approximately 4 months per year. The town is currently unable to recycle any materials due to CR&R

equipment failure, which has been an issue all year. The town is still advertising that we recycle, which undermines public trust and sustainability goals.

The town's current service includes the following:

Service Overview

- Weekly residential and commercial trash pickup by town staff
- Curbside recycling offered but unreliable
- CR&R hauls both trash and recyclables to Waste Management

Recycling Program Challenges

- No recyclables processed thus far in 2025 due to equipment failure
- Service only available approximately 4 months per year due to \$25,000 loss cap

Residential Customer Rates:

- \$27.00 in July 2025
- \$28.00 in July 2026

Town's Cost to Operate:

- Rising labor, benefits, equipment maintenance costs
- Aging fleet with ongoing capital replacement needs
- Reinvestment needs outpacing current revenues

The town can look at a few alternatives:

- Continue to operate as we do today, with town Employees, and seek a new contract service provider for hauling and recycling
- Change to a Contracted Services Model – where the town contracts out all sanitation services under a contract and maintains billing and customer relations
- Hybrid approach where the town continues to provide trash services and contracts out recycling services

Staff is recommending the Contracted Services Model based on a preliminary proposal from Waste Management for the following level of service:

- Direct residential curbside trash & recycling collection
- Commercial service: \$29.54/container/week (300-gallon, 1x/week)
- Residential service: \$24.54/month
- Town retains billing responsibility at current residential rates to cover administrative fees:
 - \$27.00/month (July 2025) Residential
 - \$28.00/month (July 2026) Residential
- Additional services:
 - Bulk item pickup scheduling for up to four items for up to six times per year
 - Yard Waste pickup
 - Enhanced operational and customer service support
 - Use of existing town carts

Another consideration is that the town has 3 ½ employees in the sanitation department. Waste Management is willing to offer employment to current town sanitation drivers at a higher rate than they currently earn. They will be eligible to transfer with their tenure and honoring their accrued paid time off. This will offer continuity of employment and potential for expanded career opportunities which supports a respectful transition for impacted employees. Employees who wish to remain with the town may be placed into other roles within the Public Works Department, based on availability and qualifications.

The benefits to the town of moving to an option with Waste Management include the following:

- Restores integrity to the recycling program
- Reliable, full-service provider with regional infrastructure
- Avoids costly vehicle replacements and more aggressive rate increases
- Town retains billing/customer relationship
- Rate buffer supports long-term financial planning
- Improved service delivery and operational stability

The town can proceed with procurement options of either a traditional Request for Proposals (RFQ) process or a direct contract negotiation with Waste Management through a cooperative purchasing contract as they have contracts with Litchfield Park, Show Low and Eloy. The RFP process will take several months and is unlikely to provide the same level of service and reliability.

Staff recommends initiating contract negotiations with Waste Management and for the town to maintain the billing and oversight. This transition enhances service reliability, supports employees, and aligns with the current rate plan.

Councilmember Bedoian asked why the town would maintain the billing. Director Workman stated that then the town maintains some level of control over rates and the customers in the event there is an issue, and the town must take it back. Town Manager Smith stated that it keeps the consistency within the community of same rates as the town can negotiate better rates than each resident calling Waste Management directly for their rates. The proposal in the presentation is just an estimate as there is no contract yet and the town hasn't started negotiations. Council also has the discretion if there needs to be a reduction in force for positions that are eliminated, but Waste Management has agreed to work with the employees. There are current public works vacant positions, but the employees need to be qualified and interested in those positions.

Director Workman stated that Waste Management has a truck for commercial pickups including the 3-yard dumpsters for manure.

Town Attorney Stuhan stated that the reason to go with the cooperative purchasing contract is that Eloy has already negotiated the rates and they can't

give the Town of Wickenburg a worse deal. There might be extra services that will need to be negotiated.

Consensus of Council was to negotiate with Waste Management and bring back a proposal.

2. Discussion and Direction to Staff Regarding Non-Profit Funding Requests

Troy Smith, Town Manager, stated that this item is to look at changing the Town Code to clarify non-profit funding similar to other communities. This change will show there is a value exchange and a benefit to the community to help with the gift clause question. Any non-profit seeking funding will have to submit that request in writing and include the following information:

- The amount of funds requested
- The intended use of the funds
- The public purpose serves
- The nature and amount of benefit to the town including any direct benefits to residents or other consideration received in exchange for funding

This addition to the Town Code will not change any existing contracts but will allow the town to have a written process for any requests for funding from a non-profit organization.

Councilmember Nyberg asked about the bed tax funding. Town Manager Smith stated that the funding source will not be relevant as the non-profit will make the request and the town will decide on the funding source. This will provide a structure for any entity to know what information is required.

Councilmember Clark stated that he hates red tape and wondered why this couldn't be done with a conversation with the non-profit instead of additional reporting. Town Manager Smith stated that this will not change any existing contracts and the ones with current contracts already follow this process. This will just codify what is in the agreements and give structure for any future requests that might not be from just the three main non-profits.

Mayor Bratcher asked about the \$10,000 Bed Tax Grant and whether this would fall under this. Town Attorney Stuhan confirmed that the grant will fall under this policy as they need to show the public purpose and what the town gets in exchange for the funding. This is more educational to have everyone have the same standard. The Bed Tax Grant asks for this information in the grant application.

Councilmember Rovey had an issue with the penalties as she didn't think that it should be a Class One Misdemeanor. Town Attorney Stuhan stated that this penalty is what is in code, but for this we can change the penalty as we would not

take them to court, but if there was a misappropriation of funds, they would either not receive the funds or have to pay them back per the contract. Town Manager Smith stated that Deputy Town Manager Suan monitors the funding to the organizations through their reports.

Mayor Bratcher stated that she likes continuity and that the rules are the same for everyone. She would like everyone to look over the ordinance and get comments back to Town Manager Smith.

Councilmember Jones doesn't want to add bureaucracy to anything and wondered what the benefit of this change would be for the town and the organizations. Town Manager Smith stated that if a non-profit didn't know how to ask for funding, this would let them know what is required so that all requests are considered in the same way. Paragraph B shows what is required in order to have access to funding to avoid any issues with the gift clause and keep the town legal. Any requests that have all the information required will then go to the Council for approval of funding. The Council has the discretion of which entities to provide funding. Town Attorney Stuhan stated that section C shows that all requests that are complete will go to the Council and this shows the organizations what information is needed prior to sending it to the Council to avoid liability. The town has the right to audit the funds to make sure that they are used for the requested purpose. Usually this is done through the reports and backup documents that are submitted, but the specifics of any audit will be in the written agreement that is signed by the organization.

Consensus of Council was to review the information and bring their ideas and questions to Town Manager Smith. Town Manager Smith stated that staff will meet with the non-profits who have current agreements to get their input.

3. Discussion and Direction to Staff Regarding Designating a Tourism Zone for Political Sign Placement

Town Manager Smith stated that cities and towns have the ability, through a resolution, to designate an area of town as a political sign free zone. This is usually for an area designated for tourism to make it more aesthetically appealing. This does not affect private property. This is only to regulate the signs that are in the public right-of-way.

Steve Boyle, Community Development Director, showed some areas in town to give ideas of what could be included:

- Entertainment District was established via Resolution 2318 in 2017 for most of the downtown, stopping at the railroad tracks
- Heritage District is in the zoning code and expands the downtown area to Adams Street

- Vulture Mine Road District covers the commercial area along West Wickenburg Way from the LDS church to West Plaza, near Vulture Mine Road
- East Gateway District includes the area entering the town from the East on US-60 to the roundabout
- West Wickenburg Way includes the business area along the road starting at the downtown going west

Town Attorney Stuhan stated that the town can only have two zones in town, up to 3 square miles each.

Councilmember Nyberg stated that she would like to include the downtown retail area for safety as the signs can be a hazard on Tegner. The signs can still be on private property, but this would keep the downtown planters clear of signs.

Mayor Bratcher stated that she has received complaints from residents specifically about Tegner and Frontier Streets, as that is the tourism area.

Councilmembers Bedomian, Clark and Rubash thought it was fine the way it is now.

Mayor Bratcher, Vice Mayor Jones, Councilmembers Nyberg and Rovey would consider a small zone of only the downtown, focused primarily on Tegner Street.

4. Discussion and Direction to Staff Regarding a Sister City Program

Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager, stated that a partner/sister city is where a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities is set up and officially recognized after the highest elected or appointed officials from both communities sign off on an agreement. Usually this is established due to a common reason that connects the two cities such as:

- **Cultural & Heritage Exchange** – Share traditions, arts, and ancestral connections
- **Economic & Tourism Growth** – Promote trade, business, and travel
- **Education & Youth Engagement** – Enable school, student, and teacher exchanges
- **Shared Learning & Collaboration** – Address civic challenges and share best practices
- **Global Relationships** – Foster diplomacy, mutual support, and humanitarian ties

Sister city partnerships are common across the country and throughout Arizona, with many cities forming international connections. While there aren't any official Arizona-to-Arizona Sister City pairings, there are examples of regional collaboration, such as the East Valley Partnership among cities like Mesa,

Gilbert, and Chandler, and the Arizona–Sonora Megaregion, which links border communities on both sides for shared economic and policy goals. A more flexible approach can be seen in Sedona’s recent “friendship agreement” with Canmore, Alberta. Rather than committing immediately to a full Sister City designation, they began with a simpler two-year partnership agreement based on shared values and cultural exchange. This kind of informal agreement can be a practical first step and can evolve into a formal Sister City relationship over time.

In 2012, Wickenburg and Jasper, Alberta became partner cities through a town resolution, chosen for their shared connection as endpoints of Highway 93. The relationship was highlighted when Jasper’s fire chief cycled the full route between the two towns.

Key decisions for the future include deciding whether to continue with Jasper or explore a new or additional partner. If seeking a new connection, we need to consider location—within Arizona, within the U.S., or international. We also have to choose how to identify a partner such as through an organization like Sister Cities International or independently. Then the Council will need to provide direction to define clear goals, scope, and desired outcomes for the partnership. Leadership could come from the Town Council, staff, an internal committee, or an external partner, depending on the structure the Council chooses. The program would require an estimated \$2,300 to \$12,300 annually, along with staff time for coordination, planning, and ongoing communication to keep the partnership active and effective.

Councilmember Rovey provided information from a resident, Liz Mead, who came up with an idea to partner with Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco, Mexico due to it’s shared equine. To join the Sister City program, the cost is \$310 annually and they will help to make the connections as they have cities that are interested. Jasper Canada was hit by wildfires last year that wiped out about half of the town, so Wickenburg should have reached out then to help.

Town Manager Smith asked if the Council would like to try to rekindle the relationship with Jasper or do something meaningful with another town.

Councilmember Nyberg would like to look for a connection that will bring tourism to town so she was thinking that marketing would happen between the two towns.

Consensus of Council was to let the residents who have expressed interest in this program to bring back a proposal.

- 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 Rebecca Rovey to adjourn at approximately 7:46 PM

SECONDED BY Councilmember Kristy Bedoian

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 study session meeting of the Town Council of Wickenburg, Arizona held on June 16, 2025. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Amy Brown, MMC
Town Clerk