



City of Prescott

City Council - Special Meeting

May 20, 2025 | 1:30 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 1st Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman - arrived at 1:39 p.m.
Brandon Montoya - Councilman
Eric Moore - Councilman
VACANT SEAT

3. COUNCIL CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS & APPOINTMENT OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER

- A. Conduct Interviews of Four Council Candidates:
1. Interview of Patrick Grady (1:30 pm - 2 pm)
 2. Interview of Sherrie Hanna (2 pm - 2:30 pm)
 3. Interview of Rex Mason (2:30 pm - 3 pm)

Mayor Goode summarized the process for interviewing the candidates for the current City Council vacancy.

Interview of Patrick Grady

First candidate, Patrick Grady, provided an opening statement. He expressed gratitude for being a finalist and said he hopes the interview process highlights both his experience and personal qualities. Rather than focus on his resume, he emphasized that he brings collaboration, pragmatism, nonpartisanship, and consensus-building to the role. He believes his professional success and past work with the body reflect these qualities and his ability to achieve positive outcomes in various cities.

Councilman Gambogi arrived at 1:39pm

Councilman Montoya asked the first interview question and Mr. Grady responded that he has been involved with the General Plan for several years and appreciates the work of the review committee. He is focused on ensuring the

plan makes it onto the ballot. He mentioned ongoing discussions with city staff and colleagues, especially about the climate and energy section, where they made progress in removing some controversial language and strategies. He is hopeful that the upcoming draft will reflect these changes and address citizen concerns enough to allow the plan to be presented to voters this fall.

Councilman Gambogi asked the second interview question and Mr. Grady responded that he attended the Highway 89 work session and supported the focus on safety and congestion. However, he wants more attention on the scenic byway, watershed impacts, and potential rock disturbance in the Narrows. He looks forward to the July design update, especially details on roundabouts and wildfire evacuation planning, and hopes to hear from the fire chief on that issue.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked the third question and Mr. Grady responded that the region is not in safe yield, with dropping water levels, dry wells, and reduced river flows. He emphasized the need for a thorough, fact-based study to assess the costs, impacts, and potential mitigation of proposed water projects, such as those affecting the Verde River. While it may need to be part of the solution, he noted other options should also be explored. Grady said he brings an analytical mindset and experience reviewing feasibility studies, and while he's unsure if it will be a top council priority during the next two years, he believes the work needs to begin soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked the fourth question and Mr. Grady responded to be honest he has not reviewed the current city budget, but has experience in his past professional life with city budgets.

Councilman Moore asked the fifth question and Mr. Grady responded that he supports the formation of a steering committee and the recent RFP for the Rodeo Fairgrounds master plan but expressed concern that the current focus is too design-oriented. He emphasized the need for a feasibility study, especially if an event facility is central to the plan's success and revenue goals. Key issues like size, traffic impacts, and event types need to be better understood before moving forward. He also expressed strong personal support for the rodeo and its cultural value, citing his background in western heritage and local history, but stressed the importance of evaluating feasibility first.

Mayor Goode asked the sixth question and Mr. Grady emphasized two priorities: continuing implementation of the Water Management Policy and unlocking the airport's economic potential. He praised the Council's water efforts and, drawing on his economic development background, urged stronger coordination to attract aviation-related businesses to the airport.

Mayor Goode asked the last question and Mr. Grady responded that his background in economic development, planning, historic preservation, and downtown revitalization equips him to contribute immediately to city growth efforts. He emphasized his experience working with mayors and councils in major cities and believes he can add value quickly despite a learning curve. Personally, he and his wife have loved living in Prescott for the past eight years and are deeply committed to its future. Serving on the council would be a

meaningful way for him to give back.

Interview of Sherrie Hanna

Mayor Goode welcomed Sherrie Hanna who thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity and acknowledged the strong pool of candidates. She expressed her long-standing love for Prescott and noted her history of volunteering time and resources to benefit the city. She believes she's qualified and hopes to earn a seat on the Council to help oversee and support Prescott's future.

Councilman Montoya asked the first question and Ms. Hanna responded that she does not fully support the current general plan, expressing concern that it includes elements—such as a discrimination clause and certain mandates—that go beyond its intended land-use focus. She fears these additions could impose costs on the public and potentially jeopardize federal funding due to DEI-related content, citing recent funding losses in other jurisdictions. She believes the plan should be revised to avoid risking public rejection or financial consequences.

Councilman Gambogi asked the second question and Ms. Hanna responded that she views the issue primarily through a public safety lens. She emphasized trust in the ongoing ingress/egress study, which evaluates emergency evacuation routes and traffic flow. She supports whichever solution or alternative the city's police and fire leadership determine is best for emergency preparedness and public safety.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked the third question and Ms. Hanna responded that she supports exploring advanced water recycling technology to convert wastewater into potable water as an alternative to tapping the Big Chino aquifer. She emphasized the need to preserve natural resources like the Verde River and noted that cities in Arizona and neighboring states are already pursuing similar solutions. She advocates for Prescott to lead on this issue by reviewing its existing water agreement with Prescott Valley and SRP to ensure compatibility with this new direction.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked the fourth question and Ms. Hanna responded that she commends the balanced city budget and prioritization of key areas, including public safety and economic development. She supports recent steps like hiring an economic development director and funding new fire stations through Prop 478. Hannah emphasized the importance of clean, safe streets, supporting tourism and sales tax revenue, and suggested surveying local business owners to better understand and meet their needs for continued economic growth in Prescott.

Councilman Moore asked the fifth question and Ms. Hanna responded that the rodeo is important to Prescott's heritage and economy, noting it as one of the city's top revenue-generating events alongside Christmas festivities. She acknowledged the need for greater cooperation between the rodeo and nearby residents, suggesting that improvements like reduced lighting and sound have helped and that continued collaboration between the city, neighbors, and the rodeo is essential to ensure mutual benefit and long-term success.

Mayor Goode asked the sixth question and Ms. Hanna responded that she fully supports the strategic plan, noting progress with police and fire improvements and stressing the need to address aging infrastructure due to growth. She values preserving natural resources for quality of life and tourism revenue. Overall, she believes the plan effectively sets a positive direction for the community over the next five years.

Mayor Goode asked the last question and Ms. Hanna responded that she believes she would make a positive difference on the Council by being a good listener who represents everyone fairly, even when she disagrees. With many years of community involvement and leadership, she stays informed about local issues and maintains strong connections, especially with business owners. She is vocal when needed but focused on what's best for Prescott. Having closely followed council activities, she feels prepared to hit the ground running and values her good working relationships with current council members to collaboratively address upcoming challenges.

Interview of Rex Mason

Mayor Goode welcomed Rex Mason who introduced himself as a resident of Prescott for 32 years, noted that he began following city policy more closely when his spouse joined the City Council in 1997. He stated that while he has a general understanding of city issues, his knowledge is not in-depth, and he expects to spend time getting up to speed.

Councilman Montoya asked the first question and Mr. Mason responded that the general plan contains unnecessary language, which he believes could increase the risk of legal challenges. He specifically noted a statement about constitutional protections that he considers redundant and potentially problematic. While he hasn't read the plan in full, he generally agrees with the overall content.

Councilman Gambogi asked the second question and Mr. Mason responded that he approaches each issue individually and without a set agenda. Regarding the potential widening of the road through the Dells, he shared his daily experience driving it for the past eight years and emphasized the heavy traffic volume. He believes widening is inevitable due to safety concerns and congestion, comparing it to the eventual expansion of Williamson Valley Road. While he supports reviewing all relevant data, he feels the road will ultimately need to be widened to address growing demand and emergency access concerns.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth asked the third question and Mr. Mason responded that he has visited the Chino water areas and shared insights from local experts and personal conversations, suggesting there may be significant untapped groundwater in the area. He emphasized the need to verify current data and begin some form of water recovery to protect local rights and prevent the state or SRP from reclaiming the resource.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme asked the fourth question and Mr. Mason responded

that while he doesn't know the budget in detail, he prioritizes six core city services: police, fire, streets, water, sewer, and trash. He believes these are essential and should be the city's primary focus. Economic development is also important, especially given past losses of commercial opportunities. Spending beyond core services should be considered discretionary and evaluated carefully. He also noted the ongoing rodeo funding debate needs close attention, though he lacks detailed knowledge on that issue.

Councilman Moore asked the fifth question and Mr. Mason responded that he supports preserving and enhancing the Prescott rodeo, which he sees as a vital part of the city's identity and history. While acknowledging some neighbors may oppose it, he believes the rodeo has longstanding precedence, similar to the airport. He views it as a cultural, entertainment, and economic asset that draws visitors and unites many residents. He doubts the proposed \$15 million would be enough for major redevelopment but sees value in using the funds for improvements and possibly leveraging more support. While not expecting full consensus, he believes many in the community share his view and that preserving the rodeo is the right direction.

Mayor Goode asked the sixth question and Mr. Mason responded that he feels economic development, including the rodeo, should be a basic priority. Policies should better support investors. He's hopeful about some hotel projects but worried about lost opportunities and delays, which can kill development. His views come from 30+ years as an architect.

Mayor Goode asked the last question and Mr. Mason responded that over the past 12-15 years, community divisions and negativity have grown, unlike the friendlier, cooperative spirit from before. He's unsure why the animosity developed but hopes to find ways to overcome it. He recalls past campaigns where opponents were respectful, unlike recent times with increased hostility. He emphasizes he's not agenda-driven, willing to listen and learn, and ready to work openly and thoughtfully if chosen.

Member of the public Stephen Cook spoke in support of Patrick Grady and admires his ability to find common ground and offer wise, reconciling counsel. He'd be a great asset to the council.

Member of the public Deb Thalasis commented that there's a tough choice between candidates who have clear, fixed positions and one who focuses on gathering information before deciding. She emphasized that the real challenge is deciding how each candidate will approach the job, not just what they think.

Member of the public Lucy Mason spoke in support of her husband Rex Mason and praised her husband's heartfelt commitment, experience as an architect, and dedication to learning. She emphasized his willingness to listen and study issues carefully, believing these qualities make him a strong candidate for the council.

MOTION BY COUNCILWOMAN FRUHWIRTH TO CONVENE EXECUTIVE

**SESSION; SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM CANTELME: PASSED (5 - 1)
COUNCILMAN MONTOYA DISSENTING**

B. Selection of Appointee for Council Vacancy.

Mayor Goode reconvened an open session meeting at 3:48 p.m. and announced that both he and Councilwoman Fruhwirth would be recusing themselves from the vote on appointment, both are elected members of the Republican Party and take an oath of office to not vote for any candidate who is not a registered Republican. So therefore, cannot participate in a process in which a vote could be biased. Mayor Goode turned over the meeting to Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme. Mayor Goode and Councilwoman Fruhwirth left the meeting room.

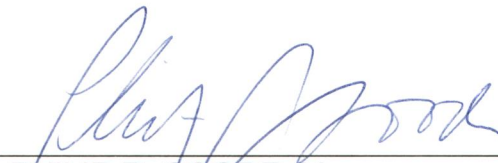
Councilman Gambogi commented that all three candidates clearly care about the city and are capable, making the Council's decision difficult.

**MOTION BY COUNCILMAN MONTOYA TO SELECT PATRICK GRADY TO
FILL COUNCIL VACANCY THROUGH NOVEMBER 2027 AND BE SWORN
INTO OFFICE; SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOORE: PASSED (3 - 0 - 1)
MAYOR PRO TEM CANTELME ABSTAINING.**

Mayor Goode administered the Oath of Office for Councilman Patrick Grady.

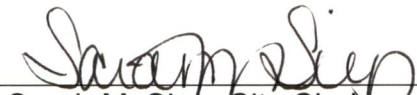
4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.



PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor

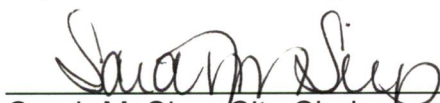
ATTEST:



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on May 20, 2025. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

