



City of Prescott

City Council - Workshop Meeting

January 20, 2026 | 9:00 AM
Highlands Center for Natural History
1375 S Walker Road
Prescott, AZ 86303

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rusing called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing - Mayor
Lois Fruhwirth - Mayor Pro Tem
Mary Frederickson - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman (Arrived at 10:19 a.m.)
Jim Garing - Councilman
Patrick Grady - Councilman
Jay Ruby - Councilman

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation, Discussion & Consideration for the City of Prescott Council Strategic Planning Retreat & Workshop Day I.

Highland Center Education Director Maria Icenogle welcomed the Council and staff to the Center. The Center is based on 80-acres of land whose mission is to help children and adults discover the wonder of nature.

Mayor Rusing commented on what an amazing resource the Highland Center is for the Prescott Community. The goal today is to find a way to collaborate and communicate better with each other.

City Manager Dallin Kimble thanked everyone for coming. This planning will help us get to the vision that the Council has laid out.

Raftelis Executive Vice President Michelle Ferguson began the workshop by introducing Janae Janik and Julie Gieseke who will be facilitating the workshop with her, and reviewed the outline for the meeting. She reviewed their meeting norms: listen with respect, be positive and realistic and strive for consensus where it can be found. The Council and executive staff introduced themselves. Key themes were working better together, setting goals and priorities. The Mayor and Council shared their "This I Believe" statements about Prescott.

Recess at 10:35 a.m., reconvene at 10:55 a.m.

Ms. Ferguson continued with a true today and true in 10 years exercise for Prescott. Some things that the group saw as true now and hope will still be in

five years:

- * Natural beauty and environment
- * Outdoor recreation
- * Public safety services and overall safe community
- * Sense of community and small town feel
- * Vibrant downtown
- * Preserving resources

What isn't true today, but is hoped for in ten years:

- * Economic development, diversity of workforce, affordable housing
- * More younger families, serving multiple generations
- * More civic engagement and inclusion
- * Sustainable growth and strategy
- * More robust parks and recreation
- * More modern infrastructure

Councilman Grady commented on the lack of discussion around specific neighborhoods versus overall citizen engagement.

Police Chief Amy Bonney added that she noticed the these discussed fit into the Council's Strategic Plan.

Ms. Ferguson moved the discussion to the Strategic Plan, and Mr. Kimble reviewed discussions between the Department Heads in the last week related to strategic planning.

City of Prescott Values:

- * Current - we believe in acting with integrity, taking pride in excellent results, having personal commitment and loyalty, a high level of productivity, working as a team, solving problems, being nice
- * Proposed - we serve by acting with integrity, taking pride in excellent results, being accountable, focusing on our community, working as a team, practicing innovative problem-solving, being nice

The values have not previously been included in the Strategic Plan. However, Mr. Kimble stated that the plan would be to include it moving forward.

Council and staff discussion regarding the use of the word "nice" in the values statement.

HR Director Branden Nunez discussed that the employee culture is incredibly high, and values play a big part in that. They live them every day, awards are given annually related to them, etc.

Mr. Kimble continued with a discussion regarding the strategic priorities and some proposed revised language to the goals.

Strategic Priorities:

- * Public Safety Result I - through partnerships and investments in public safety infrastructure and personnel, the community will experience improved

emergency services and results as evidenced by

- two (2) new strategically located fire stations by FY28
- 90% of category one (life safety emergency) responses will be made within 8 minutes by FY29
- full digitalization of public safety radios by FY30

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth asked if it is appropriate to consider cell phone connectivity as part of infrastructure rather than 911 calls, because there are still areas for improvement.

Councilwoman Frederickson concurred.

* Public Safety Result II - by FY28 the community will experience a feeling of safety through the presence of police officers and the increased capacity to respond, as evidenced by

- full staffing for the police department
- proactive community policing in downtown
- a reduction in the severity of collisions

Councilman Gambogi commented that there is a speeding and moving violation issue in the community, and he thinks that needs to be addressed, though he isn't sure how.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth concurred, there needs to be more presence.

Councilman Ruby suggested the language "safe traffic flow through enforcement".

Chief Bonney commented that the department's goal is to make the roads safer and educate drivers, rather than using citations as a measurement.

* Public Safety Result III - by FY31 the community will fortify its sense of personal and economic safety through runway infrastructure improvements at Prescott Regional Airport that will support unconstrained operations with wildland firefighting aircraft, commercial airlines and other airport tenants.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth commented that she would like to see the word "experience" remain rather than replacing it with "fortify".

* Public Safety Result IV - moved from Natural Resources Section; by FY28 through regional cooperation and partnerships and a comprehensive risk assessment that builds a strategic mitigation response.

Recess at 12:00 p.m. for lunch; reconvene at 12:45 p.m.

* Dynamic Economy Results I & II - by FY30 the city will attract 500,000 square feet of new commercial development to serve the growing number of residents in the northern part of the community; by FY30 the city will attract or retain 300 jobs in aviation/aerospace, advanced manufacturing and/or healthcare

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth commented that she would like to see this be a goal sooner than FY30, and that she would like to attract and retain not "or". Perhaps with tiered results.

Economic Development Initiatives Director John Heiney commented that there also needs to be clarification as to what the metric is. For example, is it having a company coming, or is it a business opening its doors, because even if a new commercial center is announced in June, it would still be a year and a half before they open their doors.

Councilwoman Frederickson added that there are things in the pipeline or existing businesses adding jobs that would be able to meet the earlier tiers.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth added that she has a sense of urgency because future plans and goals of departments need sales tax revenue to be accomplished and the northern part of the community needs services now.

Mr. Kimble said that this goal could stay as is, but perhaps there is an opportunity to add in additional goals for the shorter term (FY28, etc.) to infill some of the existing space.

Mr. Heiney concurred, increase occupancy or decrease vacancies to fill those empty spaces in FY27 and FY28.

Mayor Rusing commented that "technology" should be added to the industry list.

Consensus to add metrics regarding vacancies and adjusting the fiscal year goals, as well as reporting what is currently happening.

* Dynamic Economy Result III - by FY28 the annual direct spending from tourism will exceed \$288 million

* Dynamic Economy Result IV - the community will experience a full-service regional airport that provides reliable, sustained, commercial air service as evidenced by

- by FY27 complete an airport master plan that aligns with the City's Economic Development Strategic plan for attracting new high-paying jobs and commerce around the airport

- by FY28 two (2) new aviation and aerospace-related businesses will be located near the Prescott Regional Airport

- by FY29 the annual economic impact from the Prescott Regional Airport area will grow from \$162 million to \$186 million

Councilwoman Frederickson asked how the economic impact around the airport area is measured.

Airport Director Rick Crider stated that there is a study done which determines those figures.

* Natural and Built Infrastructure Result I - the community will experience the

safe, efficient flow of traffic/transportation throughout the city as evidenced by

- by FY26 there will be a reduction in serious traffic injuries/fatalities
- by FY28 there will be a plan with implementation strategies for safer pedestrian access to downtown and commercial/retail services

Councilman Gambogi commented that staff needs to look more closely at what scenarios can be looked at, for example adding traffic lights or crosswalks, etc, in order to be able to pinpoint where reductions could be made. He added that timed traffic lights is also something that needs to be addressed.

Public Works Director Gwen Rowitsch responded that within city boundaries and on city arterials the lights are coordinated, so if a person is driving the speed limit you'll hit the lights without issue, but the peak traffic time is in the middle of the day which is unique to other places.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth commented that if there are items that have been accomplished they shouldn't be removed it should be highlighted within the plan that it has been accomplished.

* Infrastructure Result II - change name of CYMPO to "Yavapai Plan"

* Infrastructure Result III - stays the same

* Infrastructure Result IV - stays the same: by FY28 in alignment with the Workforce Housing Committee, the General Plan and the Housing Needs Assessment, the city will facilitate a continuum of housing options for essential workers so they can live, work and be engaged in the Prescott community. However, Mr. Kimble commented that there is a lot that could be included and wanted feedback from the Council regarding what they would like to see focused in there.

Councilman Gambogi stated that there needs to be a specific spreadsheet of numbers related to workforce housing to determine what projects would best fit the needs.

Councilman Grady commented that there are other critical needs, like senior housing and affordable housing, which are not being addressed.

Mayor Rusing added that workforce housing, affordable housing and senior housing are not interchangeable. They are different categories.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth stated that the city needs to find solutions for its own employees, harness the losses etc. in order to start somewhere.

Mayor Rusing agreed, need to look at housing allowances, stipends, etc. as options for workforce housing. She doesn't want to see low-income section 8 senior housing. Focus on healthcare, police and fire, etc.

Councilman Gambogi reiterated that it is important to look at what will make the biggest impact and what the numbers really are.

* Infrastructure Result V - beginning in FY25 through regional cooperation and partnerships and updates to the Land Development Code regarding standards for the 25% open space requirement, the community will experience increased trail connectivity, outdoor recreation opportunities and meaningful wildlife corridors

Mayor Rusing commented that the city's Open Space policy needs to be updated and rewritten. It does not define what is usable and meaningful open space.

* Possible additions:

- by FY28 expand the passenger terminal and terminal parking to facilitate safe and efficient movement of airline passenger volumes
- rodeo master plan and funding strategy
- address aging infrastructure

Councilman Grady stated that he would like to see more language about the rodeo because that will be a big part of things moving forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth concurred. She added that something similar to the pavement index would be helpful to understand the aging infrastructure because she can't see it and doesn't know how the Council can move forward with a plan. It's easier to keep kicking the can down the road, but the aging infrastructure really needs to be addressed.

Ms. Rowitsch responded that an age/condition assessment of all sewer and drainage infrastructure could be added into the Capital Improvement Master Plan. That would likely be in the \$500,000 range to have a consultant do that. Could explore the option and bring it forward as part of the budget for the Council to consider.

Council consensus to develop an age/condition assessment for sewer and drainage infrastructure and add that information into the Strategic Plan.

Recess at 2:15 p.m., reconvene at 2:25 p.m.

* Natural Environment - proposed revision to "Community Livability" with additions:

- parks and recreation master plan
- develop an open space policy
- expand library services for North Prescott

Mr. Kimble commented that making these revisions would expand the section and make some of the other departments and focus more of a pillar for the Strategic Plan.

Councilman Gambogi stated that he likes this concept. The idea of library services in North Prescott would help with other things like traffic, and looking at whether the city has the right parks and recreation services in the right places

would be beneficial.

Mayor Rusing agreed, and added that there needs to be a focus on the library. She would like to see that dovetail into the General Plan as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth stated that the County should pay for a library facility in North Prescott because the city pays in a significant amount to the County library services and gets only a minimal amount back.

Mr. Kimble commented that "library services" doesn't have to mean a building with staff, but could be something like lockers at the new fire station etc. and agreed that having the County be a part of that is important.

Library Director Melissa Orr stated that the Friends of the Library have funding to build a facility in North Prescott, and are willing to even add to the new Fire Station that could act as a self-service library. The city's funding would be staffing and operations into the future.

Councilman Grady commented that as long as there is mention of wildlife corridors, he would be comfortable changing the section to "Community Livability".

Councilman Ruby added that a cultural events policy under this branch would help to generate sales tax revenue, something like tiered sections for emerging, ongoing and premier special events to help look at all types of events in the community. Also beginning to develop tree canopies downtown would be something he would like to see.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth asked if there are more requests for special event funds annually.

Mr. Heiney confirmed that there are typically at least two to three new applications each year.

Mr. Kimble added that the concept has been to help new events get funding in the beginning and then allow them to grow and eventually not need city funding, except for the big signature events that the city funds. Staff can look at funding events at all levels but also need to make sure that it is clear where the money is coming from.

Councilman Grady commented that Watson and Willow Lake restoration initiatives should also be included in this section.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth added that she doesn't want to see the Strategic Plan become a huge wishlist.

Council consensus to have Natural Environment and Community Livability as part of the same strategy, to ensure that the previous Strategic Priority #4 Result I is included as well as these additional initiatives and goals.

* Good Governance Result I - all to remain the same except for a change to the last bullet point: "to ensure fiscal transparency and accountability, by FY28 the city's budget will be results oriented and aligned with long-term planning."

Council discussion regarding adjusting the language so it is clear that the long-term planning and forecasting is being worked on, to further increase fiscal transparency and accountability.

* Possible additions:

- funding for plans
- align policies and practices with best practices
- develop and retain staff
- internal service metrics/ratios
- long-term financial planning

Mayor Rusing stated that she feels there should be a required State of the City address each year, also inter-agency and regional cooperation.

Ms. Ferguson responded that something like that fits more into implementation and work of departments but is not something strategic. Could be part of overall communication goals and strategy as well, for example directing to enhance and expand community engagement. She continued stating that there are big things that need to take place over the next few years but may not be part of the Strategic Plan overall. Trying to set the priorities for 2026 to set focus, she invited the Council to state their priorities without having specific conversation about them.

Council Priorities:

* Mayor Rusing - fiduciary duty; regional cooperation and collaboration with the County and the State; closer communication and collaboration with the City Manager and staff; prioritize needs first then wants; stay out of the weeds; and follow the Federal and State Constitutions as well as the City Charter

* Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth - complete, sell and pass a general plan; how to better plan regarding picking, choosing and sequencing battles; learning needs; public engagement (prioritize/sequence so the Council is in alignment); planning out ballot initiatives for the future and how to sell them; Hwy89 Effluent/Watson Lake Roundabout/Safety Improvements; Council responsibility related to employee compensation plans and ratings; how to show up as a mature and unified Council

* Councilwoman Frederickson - open dialogue with departments to understand implementation of policy; regional cooperation regarding open space and wildlife protection specifically in Granite Dells Park

* Councilman Gambogi - walk the talk; put first things first and stop chasing shiny objects; don't be lazy, do your homework and ask questions before the Council meetings, so there are no "gotcha" moments

* Councilman Garing - complete and peer review Big Chino Water Ranch groundwater flow model; complete long-term water management plan; obtain details regarding how much it will cost to implement the Strategic Plan; work with the County Elections office regarding not counting votes; establish a Committee to interview medical personnel on how to solve healthcare deficit in community;

engage the developer community to address workforce and affordable housing
*Councilman Grady: implement workforce housing projects by year's end; secure City Council approval of a Rodeo Fairgrounds master plan and lease
*Councilman Ruby: start regional water policy agreements between municipalities and the County; infill policy for neighborhoods to stimulate family housing; Charter revisions and amendments (particularly discrepancies between charter and state statute related to elections); secure economic investments in innovative healthcare; continue assessing long-term traffic solutions; begin dialogue with stakeholders around North Prescott regarding wildlife corridors, open space and commercial development

Ms. Ferguson continued with an exercise regarding what staff needs from the Council to be successful and what they are willing to give and vice versa. These were then reviewed.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Rusing adjourned the meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Cathey Rusing

CATHEY RUSING, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sarah M. Thornhill

SARAH M. THORNHILL, 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 January 20, 2026. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Sarah M. Thornhill

Sarah M. Thornhill, City Clerk

