



City of Prescott

City Council - Workshop Meeting

January 21, 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 9:05 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing - Mayor
Lois Fruhwirth - Mayor Pro Tem
Mary Frederickson - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman
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 II.

Executive Vice President Michelle Ferguson welcomed Council and appointees back and began the discussion with an overview of what was discussed during day one of the workshop.

Mayor Rusing commented that she was very pleasantly surprised to hear yesterday from Library Director Melissa Orr how much funding opportunity there is from the Friends of the Library. She added that it is important to remember that the Council needs to be working toward the good of the community as a whole.

Councilman Grady added that while there were disagreements about certain priorities the Council tends to focus in on the things they align on, which can be good but would like to have more thorough and thoughtful discussion regarding the areas where there might be disagreement.

Councilwoman Frederickson stated that she noted the list of priorities for the Council is long and is glad that there will be discussion regarding areas to focus on.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth agreed, these types of meetings are important because the Council doesn't have the opportunity to get together outside of Council meeting days.

City Attorney Joseph Young commented that the decisions Council's make impact future Councils and that is why meetings like these are important.

Councilman Ruby added that the discussion gave him a good sense of where everyone is at, and he hopes that they can be an effective Council.

City Manager Dallin Kimble commented that he thinks the staff picked up a change in tone from previous Council which is a very good thing.

Ms. Ferguson continued with a discussion regarding governing together, and reviewed the Council-Manager form of government. The Council's role is policymaking and one of the most important policy documents they have is the budget. They represent all of Prescott and have to manage what is politically acceptable while staff focuses on what is administratively sustainable. She also reviewed governance roles developed by Julia D. Novak and Dr. John Nalbandian.

Governance Roles:

- * Strategic Vision - big picture thinker
- * Trustee - steward
- * Representative - constituent advocate
- * Community Builder - bringing people together
- * Decision Maker
- * Oversight

Council discussion regarding how they would like to handle emails from the public that come to all of them, and allowing staff to address those issues and respond to citizens.

Councilman Ruby commented that citizen advocacy goes beyond emails.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth responded that she and the Mayor are working with the Council's Executive Assistant to do neighborhood meetings.

Council discussion regarding members discussing why they will be voting a certain way on an item so the public is aware.

Councilman Grady stated that he would like to see language added to the Rules of Procedure which would allow discussion after the motion and second.

Recess at 10:30 a.m., reconvene at 10:45 a.m.

Councilman Gambogi commented that he sees responding to citizen emails as a choice, for example if it is an operational thing he will forward it to the appropriate staff and if it is policy and he feels the need to respond he will. With regard to completeness of staff reports, he will contact the staff and have a dialogue with them if there are questions rather than having everything included in the information. The more dialogue there is the better, if you want a better relationship with the staff you get that by interacting with them.

Ms. Ferguson continued with a discussion regarding what good governance looks like.

Mayor Rusing stated that it is abiding by the federal and state constitution and city charter, as well as other agreements and laws. Being honest and not corrupt.

Councilman Gambogi agreed and added that sometimes it is in the eye of the beholder. For him, there should be an element of common sense and the Council being the Board of Directors but not telling the staff how to do their jobs.

Councilman Ruby stated that circulation of information is part of good governance.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth commented that a shared vision, plan and priorities is part of good governance. Those need to be renewed annually as well because things change.

Councilman Grady added that inclusivity is important for good governance, the Council is working for the good of the entire community and is non-partisan.

Mr. Kimble discussed having budget that reflects priorities, good policies and procedures, healthy processes.

Values of Importance:

- * Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth - being respectful and acting like adults on the dais; listening; a commitment to each other, staff and constituents; crisp voting meetings; helping staff show up with answers that the public might have
- * Mayor Rusing - not responding to digs (greystone); consulting with legal before taking action on something; professional appearance
- * Councilman Grady - echoed Mayor & Mayor Pro Tem's comments; finding common ground and compromise
- * Councilman Ruby - need action items that each of the members can work collaboratively on; be open and not fixed on an issue
- * Councilman Gambogi - encourage debate on a subject but not attacking a person; every issue is just a problem to be solved and shouldn't have any political or partisan overtones

Council discussion regarding letting things go and being gracious if things don't or do go your way on a vote. Focusing on community values and voting your conscious.

Ms. Ferguson moved the discussion to the kind of relationship the Council would like to have with staff; how will you engage with staff and the city manager to set a positive foundation:

- * Councilman Garing - don't undermine decisions made; staff should fight for the project the Council approves as if it were their own
- * Councilman Gambogi - have to rely on staff to get things done; it pays to say thank you and ask questions; develop a good and respectful relationship
- * Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth - people are people and everyone wants to be

treated with respect whether it is staff or and Council

- * Councilman Ruby - wants to be developed; get direct feedback; learn from each other
- * Councilman Grady - sit down with each other and resolve issues respectfully
- * Mayor Rusing - she has a leadership responsibility and will set the tone
- * Councilwoman Frederickson - bring your curiosity with respect and from a positive position
- * City Manager Dallin Kimble - good coordination; don't give direction to the rest of staff; basic respect; finish presentations before asking questions
- * City Attorney Joseph Young - direction from the whole of Council is hugely helpful
- * City Clerk Sarah Thornhill - concurred with staff and Council comments; efficiency in meetings is very important; helping staff communicate to the public the work they are doing; and helping staff create a legacy for the community going into the future

What do You Want Governing Body to Be Known For:

- * Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth - handled the big and important issues
- * Councilman Ruby - resolving challenges that exist with North Prescott and long-term regional approaches to water
- * Councilman Grady - being compassionate and caring for all members of the community
- * Mayor Rusing - only the second female Mayor of Prescott and that is important
- * Councilwoman Frederickson - reflect the best things that people say about Prescott ("everybody's Council") while getting things done

Ms. Ferguson moved on to discuss the Council's 2026 priorities (in addition to the Strategic Plan):

- * Council relations and prioritization
- * Council-staff relations
- * Water resources
- * General Plan
- * Intergovernmental relations
- * Rodeo
- * Funding
- * Elections
- * Healthcare
- * Infrastructure
- * Employee Compensation
- * North Prescott

Recess at 12:37 a.m. for lunch, reconvene at 1:11 p.m.

Ms. Ferguson began with discussion regarding the ranking of the Council's previously discussed priorities and the clear front-runner in priorities is water resources, followed by managing growth and development, general plan and economic development. This includes items going beyond what is currently in the strategic plan.

Council discussion regarding how many of these priorities are interconnected

and fold into each other, and how these priorities should tie into Council agendas.

Councilman Gambogi commented on the fact that there should be criteria related to what types of items are discussed; for example, what things are time-sensitive or could be addressed in a specific amount of time, etc.

Mr. Kimble added that staff could have a discussion Item for one of the Special Study Sessions in February to discuss what we have taken from this and what that looks like for upcoming meetings.

Mr. Young added that it is possible and reasonable to have work sessions and meetings where staff simply informs the Council on things.

Council discussion regarding having specific scaling for time requirements on items.

Further discussion regarding what makes an ideal Council member from the perspective of the public, and staff.

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 1:55 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 21, 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

