

City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session



March 10, 2026 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 1st Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rusing called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.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 Regarding a Virtual Attendance Policy for the Members of City Council.

City Clerk Sarah Thornhill provided a brief presentation and overview of the draft policy for discussion by the Council. She stated that this item was a request from Mayor Rusing and since that request, staff has surveyed other communities and put together the draft for Council's discussion in order to get general consensus on how they would like to proceed. The cost to install upgraded equipment will be approximately \$11,000 and there will also be a need for additional IT staff.

Mayor Rusing stated that during COVID the Council Chambers had virtual participation for members of the Council. Virtual meetings are done all over the world and in other areas, it is a great tool and needed at times.

Councilman Grady asked for confirmation that the cost associated would be a onetime cost.

Ms. Thornhill confirmed.

Councilman Garing commented that he participates virtually and that identification can be confirmed via a camera.

City Manager Dallin Kimble confirmed and stated that there are other technology challenges.

Councilwoman Frederickson asked about feedback from other jurisdictions.

Ms. Thornhill responded that this policy was pulled from a lot of other jurisdiction's practices and staff has put together the policies to offer a tool for the members of the Council. She also confirmed that staff can work up an emergency situation language to be included.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth stated that there are definitely city emergencies that come up when Council Members are out of town, this would be a good way for members to still be able to participate and be involved when that happens. However, she added that she appreciates the language included in the policy that the Council should endeavor to be there, she thinks it is important that the members of Council plan and endeavor to be present. She would like to see fewer virtual participation occurrence options, for example Prescott Valley has two but the draft policy proposes six which she feels is too many. Also, she feels that language regarding notification should be the presiding officer and the City Clerk.

Ms. Thornhill confirmed that those changes can be made.

Councilman Ruby commented that the usage participations are good as they are. He added that he would like to see the member that is participating remotely shown on the screen.

Councilman Gambogi asked if a representative or senator could remote in for a meeting in Washington DC or the state. He doesn't have a strong position on this but does think that it is important to look at the unintended consequences before jumping foot first into that.

City Attorney Joseph Young responded that he doesn't believe that is an option.

Mayor Rusing asked for a poll on whether the Council is in support of remote availability, Council consensus to allow remote participation. She added that she agrees with Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth that six meeting days of remote participation in a calendar year is too many.

Councilwoman Frederickson agreed and said that three should be the maximum and it should be "meeting days" versus "meetings".

Councilman Gambogi concurred.

Mayor Rusing stated that she wants the policy to be liberal, so the members of the Council can have a life. She agreed that notifications should go to the City Clerk and the presiding officer and she is in favor of notification at least two days in advance unless there are unforeseen circumstances.

Councilwoman Frederickson concurred on notification.

Councilman Garing commented that he would like to have whomever is participating remotely be shown on the screen in Chambers.

Council consensus to limit remote participation to three total meeting days per year.

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

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the City Transfer Station Master Plan 90% Design Council Presentation.

Field Operations Manager Brady Higgs introduced consultants that have worked on the design thus far Brett Wolfe and James Yost with JR Miller and Associates (JRMA) as well as Andrew Baird with Kimley-Horn. This contract began in May, to this point it is design only and staff needs Council feedback on concepts before they move forward as well as how they would like to move forward with the Intergovernmental Agreement with Yavapai County.

Mr. Wolfe began the presentation with an overview of the study background.

Background and Reason for Master Plan Study:

- * Significant growth in tonnage and self-haul user trips
- * Growth has created capacity issues
- * Increased self-haul users presents greater safety risks
- * Separation of traffic types (city versus self-haul)
- * New layout has more unloading spaces (MSW, inserts and green waste)
- * Sundog Ranch Road Transfer Station is a regional facility
- * From 2014 to 2024 Yavapai County population grew by 20% to a total of 252,000 people

Transfer Station Overall Site Plan:

- * New 17,000 square foot transfer station and site
- * Improvements to the existing Sundog Ranch Road Site
- * Utilizes new scales and scale plaza for self-haul
- * Leverages numerous existing facilities
- * Nearly complete separator of public and city vehicles

Site Traffic Flows:

- * Four separate traffic flows - recycling collections, transfer vehicles, commercial MSW and self-haul
- * Complete separation of all traffic

Mr. Baird continued the presentation with an overview of the adjacent utilities at the current site; all utilities are available to service an expansion. Additionally, he reviewed the landscaping and environmental at the site. Concept grading and drainage plan match the existing landfill.

Mr. Yost continued with a review of the transfer station exterior elevations, he discussed that the group has not yet gotten into specific plans yet because the design plan is only at 90%.

Total Project Cost Breakdown:

- * Total \$18,435,550
 - Building & Site Construction \$12,685,000

- Project Development \$3,615,225
- Owner Provided Items \$1,812,323
- Permits/Fees \$323,002

Primary Impacts of Relocating to a New Site:

- * Estimated cost of transfer station at new site is \$62 million
- * 4-5% escalation on cost for each year (existing or new) project is delayed
- * Pros:
 - Optimal traffic routing and separation of user types
 - New site provides all new/updated facilities for city staff
 - Existing site will require phased construction
- * Cons:
 - Existing buildings and features would need to be replicated at new site
 - Increased environmental and planning efforts for new site
 - If new site is not centrally located, potential to see illegal dumping

Next Steps:

- * Complete Master Plan narrative with feedback from Council
- * Initiate conversations with YC to discuss existing IGA
- * Proposed design for Transfer Station Improvements scheduled for Council approval in FY31

Mayor Rusing how much this will increase capacity.

Mr. Wolfe responded that new transfer station will be able to take 30-40% more in capacity, and recycling would also be separate facility. Self-haul would be even more of an increase.

Councilman Grady asked if the cost estimates are in today's dollars and if there would be a cost/benefit analysis at future design.

Mr. Higgs confirmed and added that they would have further analysis before moving forward with anything beyond design.

Public Works Director Gwen Rowitsch responded that funding would be considered in the next Solid Waste rate study.

Mayor Rusing commented that the city offers many services that private hauling services do not. The city does a much better job, and she thinks the residents appreciate that, so the budget needs to be worked on to come up with a plan for funding in the future.

Councilman Gambogi stated that there are certainly benefits to a new location and facility, but in looking at the existing facility, he would like to see a projection of how it would handle the full build out of the city. He also asked if the city makes any money off of taking things from Yavapai County. He thinks a capacity analysis is important.

Mr. Higgs stated that the city does not, the gate rate/fee is the same for everyone. Yavapai County has five rural transfer stations throughout the County,

but those are limited to what they'll accept and how.

Councilwoman Frederickson commented that she isn't familiar with the IGA with Yavapai County, and asked if there is something included that requires them to contribute to any expansions or updates.

Mr. Higgs confirmed, the IGA doesn't allow the city to charge different gate fee/rates, and includes a cost-share for upgrades and expansions at the Transfer Station. That amount is a 65/35 split, but that was based on population size, which would cause that to change in the future. A software system in the fee booth allows staff to ascertain whether haul is from the city or county to try and keep track of that.

Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth echoed Councilman Gambogi's comments about a cost/benefit analysis. It is important to make sure that expanding this current location would accommodate the city at build out and whether it would be able to continue to accommodate users from outside the city as well.

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 2:28 p.m.

Cathy 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 March 10, 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