

Minutes of the Altamont Town Council Meeting
July 10, 2025

Present:

Clyde Watkins

Glen Jessen

Russell Sorensen

Vicke Jessen

Craig Kettle, Town Employee

Amanda (Mandy) Gardner, Town Clerk

Scott Allen was excused from the meeting

Clyde Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Public:

1.Fire Department Update

Fire Chief Peck was not present. As a result, no report from the Fire Department was provided

2.Minutes Approved

The approval of the minutes from the June Town Council meeting was advanced on the agenda to be the second item

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen to approve the minutes of June 10 2025 as written. Seconded by Glen Jessen. Motion carried unanimously.

3.Risk Assessment Review:

This annual state-mandated review critically evaluates financial controls and assesses fraud risk for the most recently concluded fiscal year.

Separation of Duties: The council engaged in a discussion regarding the separation of financial duties within the town's operational framework.

Fraud Risk Scoring: The fraud risk assessment is a public document and is submitted to the state. It was emphasized that attaining a perfect score is challenging for a municipality of Altamont's size due to inherent limitations. The state's "one size fits all" approach, designed for larger entities, places smaller towns at a scoring disadvantage.

Written Policies: The town has formally adopted written policies in several key areas:

- Conflict of Interest
- Ethical Behavior
- Travel
- Credit Card Purchases
- Personal Use of Entity Assets (documented policies exist)
- IT and Computer Security
- Cash Receipts and Deposits

Certifications & Training: No current council members possess accounting licenses or professional certifications.

- No individual holds a bachelor's degree in accounting.
- Employees and elected officials are annually required to formally commit in writing to a statement of ethical behavior, and signed copies of these statements are on file.
- Governing body members are mandated to complete specific training once per four-year term.

Audit Functions: The town does not possess a formal internal audit function/committee. However, the annual external audit conducted by Cameron Olsen. While this audit is not legally mandated annually for Altamont due to its financial scale, the council proactively opts for its execution, recognizing its substantial benefits for accountability.

4. Cemeteries

A Cemeteries Committee is currently in its early stages of formation.

Committee Guidelines: Mandy convened with a couple of committee members and Melba Markham to discuss a set of operational guidelines.

- All proposed projects require explicit town approval to mitigate liability risks and ensure proper coordination, along with a comprehensive understanding of historical contexts e.g., rationale for past inaction on certain matters.
- The committee is expressly prohibited from creating additional workload for Craig, town staff.
- Headstones are the property of individual families and may not be relocated without explicit permission.
- Specific prohibitions were enumerated, such as filling in sunken graves, as this serves as a critical marker when headstones are misaligned.
- The rules, regulations and ordinances provided to the committee were deemed not changeable by the committee, a fact confirmed by Melba, former Town Clerk.

Committee Goals and Scope: The council articulated uncertainty regarding the committee's precise "end goal" or "agenda," noting a potential disparity between their "grand ideas" and practical, specific objectives.

- The overarching objective for the committee is "beautification" – encompassing cleaning, raking, placement of flower pots near gates, and general upkeep.
- The committee aspires to assume responsibility for both the Altonah and Altamont cemeteries, which are considered financial burdens to the town.
- A desire for a "perfect cemetery" was expressed, yet a clear methodology for its achievement was lacking.
- Discussions recalled historical precedents where committees were restricted from "interfering with the cemetery itself" but were permitted to work on peripheral areas.
- The committee is actively exploring methods to identify names and precise locations for 11 unmarked "Indian" graves in Altonah, potentially involving contact with Vital Records in coordination with the Ute Tribe.
- A past committee endeavor to secure water rights for the cemetery, which ultimately did not materialize, was cited as a potential future project.

Funding and Donations: It was unequivocally stated that plot owners, having already paid "perpetual care" fees, should not be pressured to provide additional donations for cemetery enhancements. Fundraising efforts should solicit contributions from "private individuals, not directly associated with the operation," mirroring past successful campaigns for specific needs.

- The distinction between cemeteries held "in public trust" such as Altamont's and those managed by committees reliant on annual donations e.g., Mountain Home's was underscored.
- The town must exercise discretion regarding the distribution of certain information e.g., addresses, while burial information remains public knowledge.

Current Standing: The council resolved to "wait it out and see what the committee comes to us with" regarding their specific proposals.

5. Property Management

- Legal Counsel Search: The initial recommended legal contact declined representation. A secondary recommendation was provided, and the council agreed to pursue this contact to ascertain "what is possible" before committing to any action.
- Utah League of Cities and Towns: The council will investigate whether the Utah League of Cities and Towns can offer assistance or recommendations for property management legal counsel.

6. CIB / CASI Scheduled Training (Community Impact Board / Capital Asset Scheduling Inventory)

- CIB/CASI List Training: A virtual training session with Ubag is scheduled for July 23rd at 10:00 AM, focusing on modifications to CIB/CASI list management. Council members are encouraged to attend virtually.
- Funding Application Requirement: Inclusion on the CIB/CASI list does not guarantee funding; a distinct application is requisite.
- CASI List Updates: The CASI list (2-5 year, or longer, inventory) necessitates annual updates, detailing equipment (e.g., fire trucks) and their condition, with categorized tabs.
- Funding Objective: The objective is to comprehend the application process for potential funding, specifically for a new fire engine.
- Fire Engine Funding Considerations:
 - While funding for a fire truck would be advantageous, the fire department's potential to generate substantial revenue (e.g., from external services) could influence CIB's willingness to provide complete funding.
 - The council intends to be prepared to substantiate the utilization of generated funds (e.g., for firefighter equipment/uniforms) should such inquiries arise.
- Funding Eligibility: Mayor Watkins attended a prior training in Vernal, rendering the town eligible to apply for funding in the autumn.

7. Financial Matters

Certificates of Deposit (CDs)

- Four Certificates of Deposit (CDs) are set to mature. Interest rates for 6-month and 12-month CDs have slightly decreased compared to six months ago, while some longer-term rates are consistent with January's.

- The General account was recommended for an 18-month CD for better returns, given its modest size and availability of other accessible funds.
- The Roads account was advised for a 12-month CD, as significant paving isn't expected before early spring or late fall, though oil chipping and road crossing repairs are anticipated.
- The Utilities accounts were recommended to remain in 12-month CDs due to unpredictable issues like pump malfunctions.

Money Transfers

The county treasurer preferred direct deposit for property tax distributions, which the council agreed to and will complete necessary forms.

8. Utilities

Water Conservation Challenges:

- The town is experiencing significant water conservation issues due to a recently drained pond, caused by an open drain valve, and consistently high-water usage.
- The irrigation pond is only three-quarters full and not replenishing due to low incoming water, anticipated to be only half full by season's end.
- Further drops in river levels could severely reduce the water supply, potentially ending the watering season for the BIA water, who need 1-foot ditch levels for stock water.
- While alternating watering days haven't been implemented, conservation measures are increasingly necessary.

Conservation Measures & Concerns:

- The new town website will issue alerts reminding residents to conserve water if need be.
- Major water users like the park will see cutbacks after the current celebration.
- Some large agricultural users are consolidating watering to smaller, essential areas to maximize crop yield.
- Springs feeding the Upper Country Water district are stable, but excessive usage by some individuals remains a concern.

Communication & Future Actions:

- Craig will continue to provide residents with information about incoming water levels, despite its unpopularity.
- Individual conversations with major users will be necessary if further reductions are required.

The next council meeting, August 14, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to end the meeting at 8:12 p.m. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

Read and approved this 14 day of August, 2025.
 Minutes of the meeting prepared by Amanda Gardner Town Clerk