

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
MARCH 18, 2026
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the City Council meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Pastor Phillip Hayman, Valley Baptist Church, gave the invocation, **Eric Urfer**, Director of Parks and Recreation, led the City Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

FINAL CALL

Mayor Nicholls made a final call for the submission of Speaker Request Forms for agenda related items from members of the audience.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Martinez, Morris, Smith (Telephonically), Morales, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent: McClendon
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton
Neighborhood Services Specialist, Kassandra Granados
Various Department Heads or their representative
City Attorney, Richard W. Files
City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong

PRESENTATIONS

Reading of Proclamation: Small Business Development Centers Day

Mayor Nicholls read a proclamation declaring March 18, 2026, as National Small Business Development Centers Day and encouraged Yuma's residents to recognize the vital contributions of the Arizona Western College (AWC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the small businesses that strengthen our community.

Crystal Mendoza, president of the AWC SBDC, expressed gratitude for the partnership and support that has strengthened small business development efforts in Yuma, recognizing both the City's economic development team and the SBDC team for their dedication to helping local entrepreneurs and building a stronger community.

Children's Museum Update

Sabra Lemmon, Executive Director of the Children's Museum of Yuma County, presented the following information:

- The Children’s Museum of Yuma County has evolved from a nonprofit founded in 2014 into a permanent brick-and-mortar museum opened in April 2023, offering hands-on, play-based learning for children.
- The museum now features 18 unique exhibits, supported by a donated historic building and upcoming expansion enabled by the installation of a new elevator, which will add approximately 6,000 square feet to the existing 14,000-square-foot facility.
- Twenty-seven community partners contribute to the museum’s success, including local businesses, service clubs, and regional organizations that help sustain and grow programming and exhibits.
- Field trip demand continues to increase, with 881 students visiting in 2025 and projections of approximately 1,000 for the current year, supported by exclusive Tuesday hours for school groups.
- Total museum visitation reached 50,176 guests in 2025, more than double the prior year, with visitors coming from across the United States and abroad, reinforcing the museum as a local tourism destination.
- Operating costs average \$11 per guest while admission is set at \$8, with additional discounts for military, first responders, and Electronic Benefits Transfer card holders, resulting in admissions covering roughly 40% of operating expenses.
- Planned initiatives for 2026 include installing the elevator for second-floor access, developing a makerspace with robotics and 3D printing, and launching a new agriculture-themed exhibit that highlights Yuma’s agricultural identity.
- The museum aims to expand access for south Yuma County families, strengthened by new zip-code tracking that reveals both strong local engagement and growing attendance from out-of-area visitors.
- Overall, the organization emphasizes community partnership, sustained growth, and a mission centered on enriching children’s lives through exploration, imagination, and educational play.

Discussion

- The second floor is planned entirely for exhibits, including a sensory room for visitors who need a quiet, private space, as well as two free public 3D printing stations with available instructional classes. Additional exhibit concepts, such as an agriculture-themed area, are also being considered for the upstairs space, while administrative functions will remain elsewhere in the building. **(Morales/Lemmon)**
- The museum has secured funding for the elevator and the sensory room, but the rest of the second floor and several main-floor projects still need sponsors. The museum is also pursuing support for a mobile outreach unit to reach children who cannot visit the museum. Funding needs are shared through grant applications and community donations, though the organization continues to face an annual shortfall. **(Morales/Lemmon)**
- Admissions account for 40% of the museum’s operating costs, while the remaining 60% is covered through grants, donations, and support from generous community donors. Discounted entry programs, such as Museums for All, reduce revenue but are viewed as essential for accessibility, and occasional major donations help offset these gaps. **(Morris/Lemmon)**
- Visitor origin is being tracked using a simple tally-sheet method rather than specialized software, and the system is still new. Current data is considered too early and limited to draw conclusions, especially because January and February are typically slow months due to favorable outdoor weather. **(Morris/Lemmon)**

HOME Funding Recommendations				
PY 26/27 Allocation		Funding	Consortium	Contingencies
Reprogrammed Funds		Requests	Recommendation	
	\$237,028.12			
	<u>18,269.34</u>			
	Total \$255,297.46			
Applications Received				
1	Danco Communities – Fortuna Palms	\$200,000	\$100,000	59 units –CONTINGENCY If not awarded LIHTC, funds will go to Yuma County
2	City of Yuma - Housing Rehab	\$375,000		2 reconstructions 1 major rehab
3	Yuma County - Housing Rehab	\$165,000		2 reconstructions
4	Proverbs "31 HOME"	\$230,000		Not eligible under HOME
5	Comite de Bien Estar	\$110,000		Down payment assistance
6	Bethel Development –Solara	\$300,000		Develop 80 units
7	Bethel Development–Vlstar	\$100,000		Develop 82
8	Catholic Community Services–TBRA	\$157,000	96,040	Support 16 families
	Subtotal	\$1,467,000	\$196,040	
CHDO Required (15% estimated \$35,554)				
4	CHDO Set-Aside PY 2026-27	\$35,554	\$35,554	Project to be determined
	Subtotal	\$35,554	\$35,554	
HOME Planning & Administration (10% cap - \$23,703)				
5	HOME Planning & Admin	\$23,703	\$23,703	
	Total	\$1,526,257	\$255,297	

- The City also received a \$1.4 million Lead Hazard Reduction and Healthy Homes Grant to improve health and safety conditions in older housing and integrate these improvements with existing rehabilitation programs.
- Next steps include awaiting the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocations, publishing recommendations for public comment, and holding a public hearing. The plans will be brought back for City Council consideration in May, with a goal of submitting all plans to HUD by May 15.

Discussion

- Postcards were mailed to residents in the expanded NRSA to invite them to a September 10 community meeting at Palmcroft Elementary School, which was well attended. Some residents were confused and believed the mailers were related to a proposed apartment development in the area, but they were only for the NRSA community meeting. **(Martinez/Granados)**
- The tenant-based rental assistance program is administered by Catholic Community Services, and additional details including how assistance is calculated and ongoing monitoring will be provided to City Council. **(Martinez/Granados)**
- Should allocations deviate from initial estimates, the CDBG Advisory Committee and the Yuma County HOME Consortium will reconvene to discuss fund redistribution and identify priority projects. **(Watts/Granados)**

I. MOTION CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Morris/Morales): To approve the Motion Consent Agenda as recommended. Voice vote: **approved 6-0.**

A. Approval of minutes of the following City Council meeting:

Regular Council Worksession	February 3, 2026
Regular Council Worksession	March 3, 2026

B. Executive Session

Executive Sessions may be held at the next regularly scheduled Special Worksession, Regular Worksession and City Council Meeting for personnel, legal, litigation and real estate matters pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.03 Section A (1), (3), (4), and (7). (City Atty)

C. Approval of Staff Recommendations

1. Authorize the purchase and installation of upfitting for police vehicles from Arizona Emergency Products, Phoenix, Arizona and Waltz Outfitting, Tempe, Arizona, utilizing a cooperative purchase agreement from the City of Chandler for one year with the option to renew for four additional one-year periods, one period at a time, depending on the appropriation of funds and satisfactory performance as needed at an estimated annual expenditure of \$300,000.00. (CPA-26-252) (YPD)
2. Authorize the purchase and delivery of firefighting equipment, rescue tools, and related services from L.N. Curtis and Sons, Inc., Gilbert, Arizona utilizing a cooperative purchase agreement from Sourcewell for one year with the option to renew for four additional one-year periods, one period at a time, depending on the appropriation of funds and satisfactory performance as needed at an estimated annual expenditure of \$100,000.00. (CPA-26-241) (YFD)
3. Authorize the purchase of replacement server infrastructure hardware and services, utilizing a Cooperative Purchase Agreement through the State of Utah with The Redesign Group, El Segundo, California for an estimated expenditure of \$929,269.19. (CPA-26-254) (YRCS)
4. Authorize a sole source purchase of hosting service licenses for Badger Water Meters per unit, encoders, and endpoint water meters at an estimated expenditure of \$163,013.00 for fiscal year 2026. (SS-26-146) (Utilities)
5. Ratify settlement of the lawsuit Leticia Martinez v. City of Yuma, et al. Yuma County Superior Court Case No. S1400CV202500756. (City Atty)

II. RESOLUTION CONSENT AGENDA

Resolution R2026-012 – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (to serve as a guide for the City to improve access to the City’s facilities, programs, and services to individuals with disabilities) (Eng)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Resolution R2026-012 as his firm was involved with the project, turned the meeting over to **Acting Deputy Mayor Morris**, and left the dais.

Motion (Morales/Watts): To adopt the Resolution Consent Agenda as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title:

Resolution R2026-012

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, adopting the 2025 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (pursuant to Title II of the ADA, which requires that public entities provide equal access for individuals with disabilities) (Eng)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 5-0-1, **Mayor Nicholls** abstaining due to conflict of interest.

Mayor Nicholls returned to the dais.

III. ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Morris/Watts): To adopt the Ordinances Consent Agenda as recommended.

Bushong displayed the following title:

Ordinance O2026-011

An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, annexing to the City of Yuma, a portion of Section 12, Township 9 South, Range 24 West of the Gila and Salt River Base & Meridian, Yuma County, Arizona, and amending Chapter 154 of the Yuma City Code, as amended, designating the zoning of certain property to the Agriculture (AG) Zoning District, and amending the zoning map to conform thereto, pursuant to the provisions of Title 9, Chapter 4, Article 7, Arizona revised statutes as amended (approximately 97.9 acres of property located northwest of the 38th Street alignment and Avenue C) (DCD/Cmty Plng)

Roll call vote: **adopted** 6-0.

IV. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

Bushong displayed the following title:

Ordinance O2026-012

An ordinance of the City Council of the City of Yuma, Arizona, accepting a corrected Warranty Deed for the east half of Michigan Avenue; declaring the south 20 feet of 32nd Street (9,440 square feet) and a 300-squarefoot corner triangle of right-of-way as surplus; vacating the surplus 20-foot right-of-way easement and corner triangle to the abutting property owner upon the recording of a deed reserving a 20-foot utility easement for water, sanitary sewer and other public purposes; and authorizing an exchange of the surplus right-of-way for the underlying fee title to the 80-foot 32nd Street right-of-way described in this ordinance (consistent with the City's 2005 Major Roadways Plan, which requires an 80-foot half-width right-of-way for an expressway classification along the frontage of the Palms RV Resort property) (Eng)

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHEDULING

Announcements

Morales, Morris, Watts, Martinez, Smith, and Mayor Nicholls reported on the following meetings attended and upcoming events:

- Yuma Day at the Capitol
- Meeting with Secretary of State Adrian Fontes
- Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation briefing on new projects
- Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area Board meeting
- Yuma County Anti-Drug Coalition meeting
- Yuma Coalition to End Homelessness meeting
- Western Arizona Council of Governments Yuma County Advisory Council meeting
- Yuma County Victims' Rights Committee meeting
- Salvation Army Advisory Board meeting
- Ribbon cutting for the Yuma Acne Clinic
- Humane Society of Yuma County Critter Country fundraiser
- Groundbreaking ceremony for the new San Luis Port of Entry
- Yuma Air Show

Scheduling – No meetings were scheduled at this time.

VI. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS

Simonton reported the following events:

- Spring Archery Tournament at the Pacific Avenue Athletic Complex on March 28th
- True Crime Night Tour at the Yuma Territorial Prison on March 28th
- Annual Neighborhood Clean-Up is currently in Zones 8 and 9

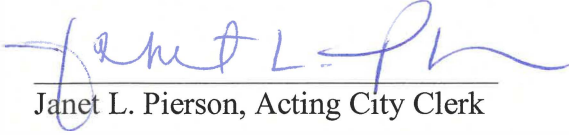
VII. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Dennis Franklin, City resident, urged the City to treat the spaceport proposal as an investment and emphasized that large ventures require a comprehensive, multi-year business plan before moving forward. Drawing from his experience with major projects, he noted that the consulting costs spent so far are modest and that understanding customer needs, supporting industries, and workforce requirements is essential to attracting major companies. He encouraged the City to approach future opportunities with a strategic business mindset to ensure long-term community benefit.

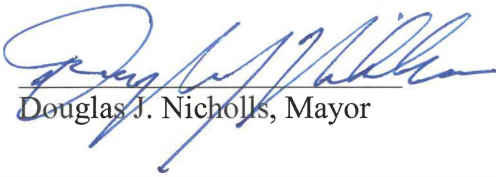
Will Katz, City resident, requested that the City reopen Kennedy Pool, noting that it was central to the Mesa Heights Revitalization Plan and has lacked public discussion despite being closed for five years. This existing community asset remains unused while the Space Port project, which lacks voter support and transparency, is moving forward. He requested a legal presentation clarifying how nondisclosure agreements are being applied to economic development matters and what information should be public.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

Motion (Morales/Morris): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **approved** 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.


Janet L. Pierson, Acting City Clerk

APPROVED:


Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of: <i>May 6, 2026</i>
Acting City Clerk: <i>Janet L. Pierson</i>