MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
June 16, 2026
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Nicholls called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:30 p.m.

Councilmembers Present:	Martinez, Morris, McClendon, Smith, Morales, Watts, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent:	None
Staffmembers Present:	Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton Fire Chief, John Louser Director of Parks and Recreation, Eric Urfer Neighborhood Services Specialist, Jorge Alcala Various department heads or their representatives City Attorney, Richard W. Files City Clerk, Janet L. Pierson

I. YUMA FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Louser presented the following Yuma Fire Department (YFD) update:

- Organizational Overview
  - Eleven new positions approved by City Council were incorporated into the Department's staffing model, including personnel assigned to Medic 7 and Fire Administration.
  - Authorized staffing totals 155 positions, with two vacancies currently being filled.
  - The Operations Division remains the Department's largest division, staffing seven fire stations, seven fire engines, one ladder truck, six ambulances, and a Battalion Chief on each shift.
  - Administrative divisions provide support for long-range planning, code compliance, emergency medical services, inventory management, public information, information technology, and medical oversight.
- Fire Station Locations
  - Station locations are intended to provide access to major roadways, high-density residential areas, and other high-risk locations while maintaining overlapping coverage between response districts.
  - A station alerting system was implemented at all seven fire stations to improve response efficiency, support firefighter safety, and enhance dispatch operations.

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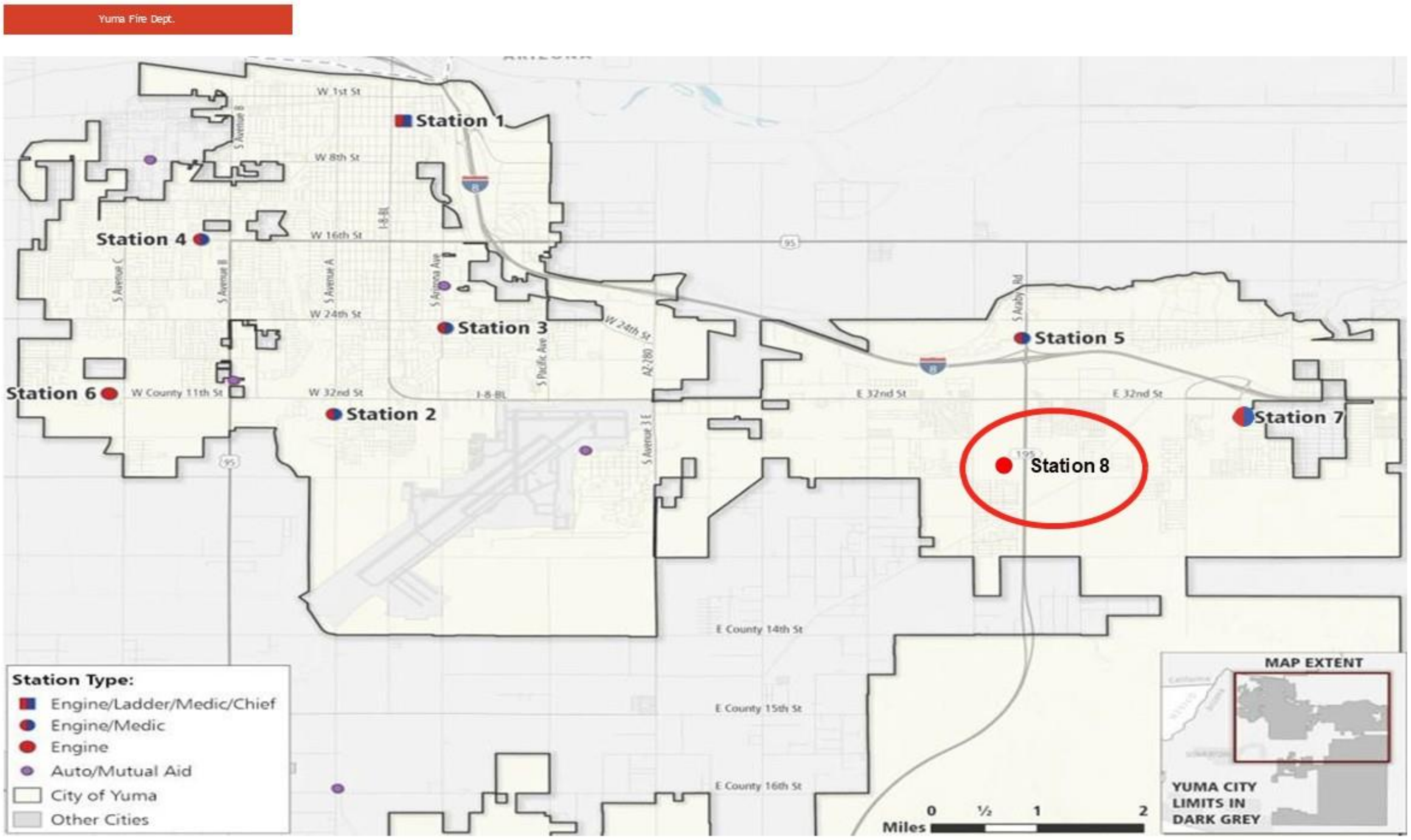

- Fire Station 8
  - A future Fire Station 8 is planned to serve the growing southeastern portion of the city.
  - The proposed station location was adjusted but remains within the planned service area.
  - The new station is intended to improve response times in areas currently served from more distant stations.
  - Station 8 is expected to enhance system resiliency by allowing neighboring stations to provide mutual coverage during simultaneous incidents and major emergencies.
  - The project is included in the Capital Improvement Program, with design anticipated to begin in 2027 and construction targeted for completion in 2030.
  - Engine 8 is expected to be placed in service upon completion of the station.
- Operational Statistics
  - YFD reported a 6.9% increase in total call volume in 2025, responding to nearly 20,000 calls for service.
  - Fire Station 3 remained the busiest station in the system, experiencing a 10.7% increase in call volume compared to the previous year.
  - More than $9 million in property and contents were saved through fire suppression efforts during 2025.
  - Operational data – including incident volume, call trends, commitment factors, and call types – is used to evaluate deployment strategies, staffing needs, and future station planning.
  - Call volume growth was observed throughout the city, reflecting continued community growth and increasing demand for emergency services.

- Performance Measures
    - Call volume increased across nearly all response districts when compared to 2024, with Fire Station 3 experiencing the largest year-over-year increase.
    - Weekly call volume trends demonstrated sustained growth over the past five years, indicating increased demand for emergency services throughout the year rather than seasonal fluctuations.
    - YFD achieved an 82% compliance rate for first-unit fire response and a 79% compliance rate for effective response force deployment, both below the established 90% target.
    - Factors affecting fire response performance include community growth, increasing call volume, and the frequency of fire apparatus responding to lower-acuity medical calls.
    - YFD met established ambulance response benchmarks for high-acuity medical calls, achieving compliance with Certificate of Necessity (CON) performance requirements.
    - Continued evaluation of response models and deployment strategies is underway to improve efficiency and maintain service levels as demand increases.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
    - EMS incidents accounted for approximately 17,000 of YFD's nearly 20,000 calls for service in 2025.
    - More than 10,000 EMS incidents resulted in patient transport to a hospital.
    - EMS call volume increased by 6.2%, while EMS transports increased by 8.5% compared to 2024.
    - Increasing EMS demand continues to place pressure on system capacity and highlights the need for operational efficiencies and alternative response strategies.
    - YFD continues to explore alternative response models, including telehealth diversion programs and partnerships that direct appropriate calls to resources other than emergency response units.
    - The co-responder program remains a tool for addressing behavioral health and other service needs while preserving emergency response resources.
    - Efforts are underway to address the misuse of the 911 system through education, community resources, and potential enforcement mechanisms aimed at reducing unnecessary emergency responses.
- Professional Services Division
    - The Professional Services Division oversees training, recruitment, regulatory compliance, leadership development, safety programs, quality assurance, and internal investigations.
    - During 2025, the Division coordinated promotional processes for eight internal candidates and supported the hiring of 17 new personnel.
    - Personnel development efforts included five new paramedic certifications, six hazardous materials technician certifications, and two technical rescue technician certifications.
    - More than 26,000 hours of training were delivered or coordinated to maintain operational readiness and compliance with state, national, and Insurance Services Office (ISO) training standards.
    - Training remains a key organizational priority and supports the Department's commitment to maintaining a highly qualified workforce.
- Community Risk Reduction
    - The Community Risk Reduction Division conducted 900 fire inspections, 699 construction inspections, and 31 fire investigations during 2025.
    - Development-related activities included plan reviews, job site meetings, pre-development meetings, code consultations, and records requests to support safe community growth.

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  - The City's fire code was updated to the 2024 International Fire Code with local amendments to maintain current fire and life safety standards.
  - An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Arizona State Fire Marshal's Office was implemented to allow YFD to conduct school inspections.
  - YFD renewed its delegation agreement with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, allowing the Department to continue issuing burn permits locally.
  - Community risk reduction efforts also included smoke alarm installations, residential Knox Box installations, and the issuance of fire activity permits.
- Public Information and Community Outreach
  - Public education and outreach efforts included station tours, school visits, career fairs, community events, classroom presentations, and other community engagement activities.
  - YFD conducted 142 in-person community outreach activities during 2025 to promote fire and life safety education and increase public awareness of Department services.
  - Social media platforms were used to share safety information, community programs, operational updates, and Department activities.
  - YFD's social media content generated more than 4 million views across Facebook and Instagram, expanding the Department's ability to communicate with residents and visitors.
- Looking Ahead
  - YFD continues to implement recommendations from its Master Plan to guide future operational, capital, and policy decisions.
  - Progress has been made toward key Master Plan initiatives, including planning for Fire Station 8, ordering Engine 8, expanding administrative support, developing a warehouse facility, and establishing an additional battalion structure on the east side of the city.
  - Efforts are underway to improve the Department's ISO rating from Class 2 to Class 1, which could result in lower property insurance costs for residents and businesses.
  - YFD continues to evaluate alternative response models and other operational strategies to address increasing call volume and improve resource utilization.
  - An amendment to YFD's CON is being pursued to allow reimbursement for Basic Life Support transports when eligible under Medicare billing guidelines.
  - Emergency management initiatives include updating the City's Emergency Operations Plan and conducting training exercises with City staff, regional partners, and elected officials to strengthen emergency preparedness and response coordination.

<u>Discussion</u>

- Heat-related incidents involving firefighters and patients are tracked, and rehabilitation policies are in place to help mitigate heat-related risks during emergency operations. (**Watts/Louser**)
- A new heat stroke treatment protocol utilizing rapid cooling techniques is being implemented for qualifying patients, with studies in other Arizona jurisdictions demonstrating significantly improved survival outcomes. (**Watts/Louser**)
- YFD is evaluating alternative response models, including a telehealth diversion program and a low-acuity response vehicle, both of which could potentially be implemented on a trial basis within approximately 90 days. (**Watts/Louser**)
- While no additional fire station is currently planned for the Fire Station 3 service area, call volume and response data continue to be monitored, and additional resources such as peak-demand ambulance services, year-round staffing, or an infill fire engine may be considered to address increasing service demands. (**Morales/Louser**)

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- Implementation of the CON amendment is projected to generate approximately $1 million annually in additional revenue, based on conservative estimates developed as part of the application process. (**Smith/Louser**)
- Fire Station 6 is currently the only station without an ambulance; however, ongoing growth and service demand are being monitored, and future deployment of peak-demand or year-round ambulance services may be considered as call volumes increase. (**Smith/Louser**)
- In addition to long-term infrastructure investments, YFD is pursuing alternative response strategies. The proposed telehealth program is estimated to divert approximately 1,900 low-acuity calls annually from the emergency response system. (**Smith/Louser**)
- YFD is evaluating expansion and remodeling of existing stations, including Fire Stations 3 and 5, to increase personnel and apparatus capacity as an alternative to constructing new facilities in areas where additional resources are needed. Planned renovations at Fire Station 5 will support deployment of an additional ladder company to enhance service coverage in the eastern portion of the city. (**Morris/Louser**)
- Response performance has remained relatively consistent over the past several years, with first-unit response times holding in the low 80% range. Emergency Response Force performance has declined slightly, largely due to continued growth in the southeastern portion of the city, where current resource locations cannot consistently meet response time goals. (**Mayor Nicholls/Louser**)
- The proposed abusive 911 use policy includes enforcement provisions intended to discourage misuse of emergency services and reduce the diversion of critical public safety resources. (**Mayor Nicholls/ Louser**)
- Tracking low-acuity calls presents challenges due to the broad call classifications used during the dispatch process. The development of alternative response programs will require more refined call categorization and dispatch protocols to better identify and route low-acuity incidents to appropriate resources. (**Mayor Nicholls/Louser**)

II. Regular City Council Meeting Agenda of June 17, 2026

<u>Motion Consent Agenda Item C.4</u> – Ratification of a Cooperative Purchase Agreement: Playground Equipment (Authorize the purchase, delivery, and installation of playground equipment for Carver and Clymer Park, utilizing a Cooperative Purchase Agreement through 1GPA in the amount of $410,607.61 to Altitude, Frederick, Colorado.) (CPA-25-211) (Parks & Rec)

<u>Discussion</u>

- The playground equipment has already been ordered to help reduce lead times. Delivery is expected in approximately nine weeks, followed by about three weeks for installation. If everything stays on schedule, the playgrounds are anticipated to be fully operational by October 1. (**Smith/Urfer**)

<u>Motion Consent Agenda Item C.2</u> – Bid Award: Reconstruction of a Single-Family Home using HOME Funds (Authorize award of bid to reconstruct a single-family home under the Neighborhood Services Housing Rehabilitation Program to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder in the amount of $147,254.75 to D’Pair Development, LLC. Yuma, Arizona.) (Cmty Dev)

Discussion

- The construction contract requires contractors to cover site preparation, demolition, utility-related work, and other project costs. Contractors review site conditions and project requirements before bidding to help ensure bids accurately reflect the scope of work. (**Morris/Alcala**)

Ordinance O2026-018 – City of Yuma Proposition 437: Signatures on Nomination Petitions (Authorize the submission of Proposition 437 to the qualified electors of the City of Yuma at the November 3, 2026, Special Election, asking whether to approve a City Charter change that will reduce the number of signatures required on nomination petitions for City elected office.) (City Admin)

Discussion

- The nomination petition signature requirement is a valuable component of the candidate qualification process, encouraging candidates to engage with residents and demonstrate their commitment to public service. (**Martinez**)
- The current nomination petition signature requirement may limit participation by prospective candidates and reduce the number of contested races. Lowering the requirement could encourage a broader and more diverse pool of candidates to seek elected office. (**Watts**)
- The proposed change would reduce the nomination petition signature requirement from approximately 998 signatures to an estimated range of 400 to 500 signatures, aligning it more closely with certain county and state offices while continuing to require significant candidate outreach and voter engagement. (**Smith**)
- Reducing the nomination petition signature requirement could increase the number of candidates qualifying for the ballot, allowing voters to consider a broader range of candidates and make informed selections through the election process. (**Morris**)
- Candidate outreach and voter engagement remain important components of the election process regardless of the nomination petition signature requirement. As a charter amendment, any proposed change to the signature requirement would be submitted to voters for final consideration and approval. (**Mayor Nicholls**)

Resolution R2026-027 - Fiscal Year 2027 - Fiscal Year 2031 Capital Improvement Program (Adopt a resolution approving the FY 2027 - FY 2031 Capital Improvement Program, pursuant to the Yuma City Charter, Article XII, Section 11.) (Eng)

Resolution R2026-028 - Final Budget Adoption for Fiscal Year 2027 (Adopt the City of Yuma's final budget for Fiscal Year 2027 in the amount of $566,762,519 which is comprised of a Capital Improvement Program Budget of $215,883,457; combined Maintenance Improvement Districts of $757,034 and Operating Expenditure / Expense Budget of $350,122,028; including Governmental and Enterprise operations. The adoption of the proposed budget resolution includes a 3% increase in solid waste fees and establishes the budgets for the Main Street Mall and Off-Street Parking Maintenance District No. 1.) (Fin)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Resolution R2026-027 and the Capital Improvement Program budget portion of Resolution R2026-028. There being no questions or discussion, he remained on the dais.

III. Executive Session/Adjournment

Motion (Morales/Smith): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **approved** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

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Janet L. Pierson, City Clerk

APPROVED:

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Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:
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City Clerk: ________________________

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