



City of Maricopa

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council Regular Meeting

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Mayor Nancy Smith
Vice-Mayor Vincent Manfredi
Councilmember Eric Goettl
Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr
Councilmember Amber Liermann
Councilmember Bob Marsh
Councilmember Henry Wade

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. An invocation was led by Pastor David Anderson from Be Community Church, which was followed by The Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Goettl.

2. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Mayor Nancy Smith, Councilmember Eric Goettl, Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Amber Liermann, Councilmember Bob Marsh, Councilmember Henry Wade and Vice Mayor Vincent Manfredi

3. Proclamations, Acknowledgements, Awards and Presentations

3.1 [PROC 26-02](#) Sepsis Awareness Month Proclamation

Mayor Smith proclaimed February 17, 2026, as Sepsis Awareness Day in Maricopa, presenting it to Ms. Fitzgerald. Mayor Smith added that sepsis is a critical condition caused by an infection that can lead to severe organ damage and death. Mayor Smith reported that the Center for Disease Control reports that 1.4 million people in the U.S., including children, survive sepsis annually, while 400,000 adults and 7,000 children die each year—more than some cancer and opioid deaths combined. Mayor Smith highlighted recognizing symptoms with the acronym TIME: Temperature, Infection, Mental decline, and Extremely ill, stressing that awareness plus rapid treatment improves outcomes.

4. Report from the Mayor

Councilmember Marsh reported attending the Central Arizona Project annual dinner on February 4th, which focused on significant water allocation issues that are crucial for Arizona. He added that the discussions revolved around the complexities and challenges the state faces regarding the Colorado River water allocations, underlining their critical implications for Arizona's water supply and the necessity of enhanced regional cooperation. On February 9th, Councilmember Marsh participated in the Senior Advisory Committee meeting. He highlighted the success of the Senior Info Expo, which drew over 600 attendees, showcasing impressive community engagement and interest. Additionally, on February 10th, Councilmember Marsh participated in a Zoom meeting organized by the Great Maricopa Business Alliance. He added that the

meeting was centered around discussions on pending Arizona legislation and its possible effects on Maricopa's small businesses, illustrating ongoing legislative engagement at the local level. Lastly, he shared that Attorney General Kris Mayes is scheduled to make an appearance at City Hall on February 27th, in which Ms. Mayes will address significant topics such as elder scams, fraud, and elder abuse, aiming to educate and protect senior residents within the community.

Councilmember Goettl reported that he also attended the Central Arizona Project event on February 4th, where discussions were focused on the complex water allocation disagreements between the upper and lower basin states of the Colorado River. He elaborated on the significant impact Arizona's water reductions have on Pinal County, which is a major concern for the regional water supply. On February 6th, Councilmember Goettl attended the Arizona Game and Fish event at the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center, where he officially welcomed the commission and expressed gratitude to them for their collaborative efforts with the city on environmental projects, such as the fish stocking of local lakes, which is imperative for ecological balance and recreational purposes. On February 7th, he participated in the American Legion pancake breakfast fundraiser, an event dedicated to supporting local veterans and fostering community spirit. Lastly, Councilmember Goettl mentioned that, due to health concerns, he wasn't able to attend the State of the City address but watched virtually.

Councilmember Wade reported on the valuable contributions of the Youth Council who supported the State of the City address, with particular recognition for Analise Alexander, who received the accolade of community champion, reflecting her ongoing dedication and excellence. He extended his compliments to Mayor Smith, praising her leadership and effective delivery of the State of the City presentation. Additionally, Councilmember Wade emphasized the significance of the Black History Month celebration at Leading Edge Academy, describing the event as phenomenal. He noted the impressive performances by sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who skillfully portrayed a variety of historical figures, enhancing the depth and educational value of the program, which included Ashley Anderson as the guest speaker, who delivered an impactful presentation that resonated with attendees.

Councilmember Knorr reported attending the State of the City event. She also reported attending the Tales and Treasures fundraiser for the Maricopa Historical Society, which she described as impressive. She also reported on her participation in the American Legion Auxiliary Paint Night fundraiser at Luxe Lounge, sharing that it was her first experience with such an event. On February 16th, Councilmember Knorr shared her participation as the liaison in the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee, in which, she praised the committee's extensive efforts to advance cultural affairs and the arts in the city. Lastly, she reminded everyone about the upcoming Copa Cultural event scheduled for Saturday, February 21st, and the Dancing for Our Stars fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club on March 28th, featuring Richard Jackson. Additionally, she announced the Maricopa Fire Foundation's first annual golf event on Cinco de Mayo, May 5th, to be held at the Duke.

Councilmember Liermann echoed praise for the State of the City event, expressing admiration for its successful execution and congratulating the students who were recognized as well as the community champions for their achievements. She shared information about exciting new programs at the Pinal County Animal Shelter, announcing initiatives such as allowing residents to enjoy short-term where they can take dogs out for a few hours or even overnight. Additionally, Councilmember Liermann reported on the Save A Life Saturday program, which offers waived adoption fees for

dogs over six months old, and the Five Dollar Fridays special. Lastly, Councilmember Liermann mentioned her attendance at the Arizona Game and Fish meeting, where she had the opportunity to meet Maricopa's dedicated wildlife manager, Travis Clarkson, noting his commitment to the region's environmental management and conservation efforts.

Vice Mayor Manfredi reported participating in a Rural Transportation Advocacy Council meeting where various rural transportation issues, important for the growth and daily life of the community, were addressed. He highlighted the necessity of such advocacy to push forward significant transportation initiatives that benefit rural areas like Maricopa. On February 12th, Vice Mayor Manfredi had the honor of representing the mayor at the graduation and pinning ceremony for four new police officers joining the Maricopa Police Department. He praised the ceremony, stating it was one of the most enjoyable and memorable events he had attended in his entire 12 years on council. He also shared his involvement in a legislative call organized by the Arizona League, where significant discussions were held about bills impacting cities. He specifically mentioned HB 2290, which proposes a change in how sales tax is assigned to cities. Vice Mayor Manfredi added that this change could potentially redirect millions of dollars in revenue away from Maricopa, prompting him to urge residents to reach out to their legislators to express opposition to this bill. Lastly, he expressed high praise for the Broadway Maricopa dinner theater performance, considering it the most entertaining arts event he had experienced in Maricopa, thus showcasing the vibrant cultural life within the city.

Mayor Smith reported attending the Maricopa Art Council Art Talk, which featured Terry Oldfield, who showcased his glass blowing talent. Additionally, she reported on her experience with the Broadway Maricopa, which she appreciated for its innovative approach to making art accessible and appreciated in the city, noting its remarkable success with five sold-out performances in just three days at the Central Arizona College facilities. Next, Mayor Smith reported attending the Veterans Pancake Breakfast, a community event filled with camaraderie and delicious food. Next, she expressed heartfelt gratitude towards the staff, youth volunteers, sponsors, and council members who contributed to the resounding success of the State of the City address. Lastly, Mayor Smith extended an invitation to the community, urging everyone to join the unveiling of the Mike Ingram Heritage Park on February 24th at 10:00 AM, highlighting the park's stunning transformation and the significance it holds for residents.

5. Report from the City Manager

City Manager Ben Bitter recognized Andy Juarez, Deputy City Clerk, for achieving the Master Municipal Clerk designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. He explained that this achievement requires significant education and commitment to the craft. He congratulated him on this accomplishment and expressed appreciation for staff furthering their education.

6. Call to the Public

Brandon Castro addressed the council.

Brad Follett, president of Earth Month Network, addressed the council about a significant incident that occurred on February 3rd involving Global Water Palo Verde Utility Company. He detailed how the company experienced a mechanical malfunction, which led to an unauthorized discharge of wastewater into the Santa Rosa Wash at the

Rancho El Dorado Parkway. Mr. Follett asserted that this incident violated various environmental regulations, including the Clean Water Act, due to the potential environmental nuisance caused by the release, which he claimed posed substantial risks by potentially contaminating the water table. Additionally, he raised concerns over Global Water's failure to adhere to public notification requirements, noting that there had been no transparency or communication about the incident with the public, prominent stakeholders, or even property owners. Despite previous assurances of improved transparency following an E. Coli outbreak incident in August, Global Water, according to Mr. Follett, failed to update their website with information regarding this discharge event, leaving the community uninformed and vulnerable.

Jon Corwin from Global Water expressed gratitude to the city and community for their patience during the disruption caused by the closure of Rancho El Dorado Loop. He added that this closure was necessitated by a mechanical failure that required the diversion of water to the wash, temporarily impacting the area. Next, he shared the importance of water conservation, in which he shared of an upcoming Fix a Leak Week, organized by the Environmental Protection Agency in March as a significant initiative to raise awareness about water conservation. Lastly, Mr. Corwin detailed the availability of resources at the Global Water Center, aiming to assist community members in identifying and addressing leaks, thereby promoting active participation in conserving water.

Peg Chapados and Ron Smith announced the continuation of Joan Koczor's newsletter, reassuring the public that it would carry on in an electronic format, distributed monthly. They explained that they are in the process of recreating the original mailing list to ensure a seamless transition and invited council members to actively contribute content to the publication. Mr. Smith elaborated on the motivation to preserve the unique charm and essence of Joan's newsletter, which was renowned for its blend of historical insights, humor, and whimsy. He expressed a commitment to maintaining the legacy of Ms. Koczor's work by retaining these key elements, allowing the newsletter to continue serving as a cherished resource and a source of light-hearted connection within the community.

Lei'sa Anderson announced the forthcoming Girl Yes event, highlighting its significance in empowering and bringing together business leaders and entrepreneurs within the community. During the announcement, she presented Mayor Nancy Smith with the distinguished 2026 Girl Yes Golden Girl Award. Ms. Anderson added that this accolade was in recognition of Mayor Smith's extraordinary community service, innovative achievements, and remarkable leadership qualities that have significantly impacted Maricopa. Mayor Smith expressed her deep appreciation for the recognition and the honor.

7. Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Councilmember Eric Goettl, seconded by Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, to Adopt the Consent Agenda minus item 7.4. The motion carried unanimously.

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Eric Goettl, Vice Mayor Vincent Manfredi, Councilmember Amber Liermann, Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Bob Marsh, Mayor Nancy Smith and Councilmember Henry Wade

7.1 [RES 26-03](#)

A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, approving and adopting a Public Safety Personnel Retirement System (PSPRS) Pension Funding Policy for Fiscal Year 2026. Discussion and Action.

This Resolution was Approved.

- 7.2 [LIQ 26-01](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on recommending approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control regarding an application for extension of premises/patio permit submitted by applicant Chris Spear on behalf of Roots Eatery, LLC located at 20046 N. John Wayne Parkway, Maricopa, Arizona 85139. Discussion and Action.

This Liquor License was Approved.

- 7.3 [SPEVLIQ 26-03](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and take action on recommending approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and control for an application for a special event liquor license provided by Brenda Campbell to allow Mandy's Wine Bar to serve alcohol during a special event known as Concerts at the Park on March 8, 2026. at Mike Ingram Heritage Park 44240 W Maricopa-Casa Grande Hwy. Discussion and Action.

This Special Event Liquor License was Approved.

- 7.5 [MIN 26-14](#) Approval of Minutes from the February 3, 2026 City Council Regular meeting. Discussion and Action.

These Minutes were Approved.

- 7.6 [MIN 26-15](#) The Mayor and City Council shall discuss and accept the meeting minutes from the January 12, 2026 Cultural Affairs and Arts Advisory Committee meeting, January 12, 2026 Senior Advisory Committee meeting and the January 26, 2026 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Discussion and Action.

These Minutes were Approved.**8. Regular Agenda and/or Public Hearings**

- 7.4 [RES 26-05](#) A Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, Renaming the Willow Room at the Maricopa Library & Cultural Center to the Willow Arts Studio and authorizing the City Manager to continue to name other rooms within city facilities as necessary. Discussion and Action.

Councilmember Goettl shared that the community would gain from an open conversation on this matter. He highlighted that although the city has a long-standing policy for naming facilities, this resolution would extend the power to the City Manager to name rooms, and thus merited public discussion. He stated the need to delve into the implications of this potential policy shift.

Councilmember Liermann expressed gratitude to the city leadership for acknowledging the requests from the arts community for a dedicated space. She detailed how the Willow Room is perfectly suited for an art studio, noting that it includes suitable lighting, easels, storage for art supplies, water sources for cleaning brushes, power outlets, mobile drying racks for canvases, WiFi, printer access, and easy-to-clean flooring. However, she clarified that the space is not exclusive to art-related activities, retaining its versatility for various uses.

Peg Chapados, who submitted a speaker card on this item, suggested the room be renamed the Judith and Gary Zaimont Art Space. She suggested this recognizing their major contributions to Maricopa's art scene since the beginning. Ms. Chapados

observed that the arts significantly enhance the city's economic development, architecture, and overall quality of life. She also suggested a needs assessment by the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee to further evaluate such spaces.

Councilmember Knorr voiced concerns over transferring the naming authority to the City Manager, particularly the absence of council oversight and approval. She argued that retaining council involvement in naming decisions would uphold a process that is both inclusive and transparent.

Councilmember Goettl made reference to city code section 2.5.70, which outlines that either the council or an advisory board/committee can submit facility naming recommendations. He shared that this section as support for maintaining a more democratic process, favoring exercising this existing mechanism over delegating such a critical function solely to the City Manager.

Councilmember Wade reflected on the original objectives behind forming the Cultural Affairs and Arts Committee, which include facilitating community and council member involvement in cultural and arts-related decisions, such as naming buildings.

City Manager Ben Bitter explained that this matter emerged from an unforeseen issue related to a rental fee policy passed last fall. This policy defined facilities as either buildings or rooms, creating ambiguity over the applicability of the code section on naming facilities to individual rooms versus entire buildings. Traditionally, rooms had been named administratively without council input, prompting a need for clarification on this practice.

Vice Mayor Manfredi shared that the administrative process of naming rooms has been a long-standing practice. He shared examples include the Willow Room, Redwood Room, and various conference rooms which had been named through internal procedures. He commended Councilmember Liermann's initiative to designate a space that fosters a sense of belonging for artists, while emphasizing the continued multi-purpose nature of the room.

City Attorney Denis Fitzgibbons elucidated that the resolution wouldn't alter the city code itself but would offer direction specific to this room, endorsing the continuity of staff-administered naming practices for new buildings. He shared that the council held ultimate authority to rename rooms, providing an option for council intervention when deemed necessary.

A motion was made by Councilmember Liermann, seconded by Councilmember Wade, that this Resolution be Approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 7 - Councilmember Amber Liermann, Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Eric Goettl, Councilmember Bob Marsh, Mayor Nancy Smith, Councilmember Henry Wade and Vice Mayor Vincent Manfredi

8.1 [PRES 26-02](#)

The Mayor and City Council shall hear a presentation from Heinfeld, Meech & Co., P.C. regarding the audit of the City of Maricopa Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and Annual Expenditure Limitation Report for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025. Discussion Only.

Finance Manager Chris Evripidou introduced Christopher Heinfeld, the audit partner from Heinfeld, Meech & Co., P.C., who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the results for the 2025 financial audit of the City of Maricopa. Mr. Evripidou highlighted the success of his small finance team in achieving their critical annual objectives,

particularly the timely issuance of the audit by December 31st, which was accomplished without any audit findings. He expressed his gratitude to his team members for their hard work and dedication throughout the audit process.

Christopher Heinfeld elaborated on the audit results, explaining that the audit was conducted in compliance with several key standards: the statements on auditing standards by the AICPA, the government auditing standards, and the statements issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). He added that the audit process commenced in May 2025, with on-site work occurring in August and November, allowing the audit report to be successfully issued by December 22nd. Mr. Heinfeld announced that the city earned an unmodified or clean audit opinion, signifying no findings or disagreements with management, which is indicative of strong financial governance and accountability practices within the city administration. Furthermore, he highlighted the inclusion of a GFOA certificate of achievement in the report, noting that last year's feedback included only one minor comment within a comprehensive 40-50 page checklist review. Mr. Heinfeld concluded by extending his thanks to the finance services division for their seamless collaboration and commitment that greatly facilitated the audit process, ensuring its completion within the stipulated timeline and standard requirements.

The Presentation was heard.

8.2 **MISC 26-03**

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Maricopa, Arizona, shall discuss and take action on Strategic Priorities to provide transparency to residents and direction to staff. Discussion and Action.

Assistant City Manager Jennifer Brown presented updates to the city's strategic priorities, which were initially established in February 2023. She explained that these priorities guide budget decisions and daily work, focusing on items that move the city toward becoming a premier city.

Ms. Brown started with Focus Area 1, Transportation, changes included updating action items to reflect leveraging local funds, including the additional sales tax, seeking support from county, state, and federal partners, celebrating achievements like the State Route 347 widening project approval, prioritizing needs for the commuting corridors half-cent sales tax, and utilizing a traffic strike force team to address high priority problem areas.

Next, she shared that Focus Area 2, Economic Development, remained unchanged, continuing to emphasize business park development, educated workforce development, and partnerships with schools and businesses.

Additionally, Ms. Brown shared that Focus Area 3, previously Housing, now Intentional Growth, the name was changed based on futures planning discussion to better reflect the broader scope. Action items were updated to focus on thoughtful planning, diverse housing, local control of zoning decisions, collaboration with regional partners to align development with the general plan and advancing regional floodplain solutions with hazard mitigation planning.

Next, she reported that Focus Area 4, Quality of Life, was broadened to seek additional recreational opportunities at Copper Sky through partnerships and innovative solutions, while maintaining focus on an iconic park, trail system, arts, and partnerships.

Additionally, Ms. Brown shared that Focus Areas 5, Destination City, priorities largely

remained unchanged.

Lastly, Ms. she shared that Focus Area 6, Public Safety, continued to emphasize data-driven methods, community policing, a fifth fire station, hazmat team creation, and preparing for in-house ambulance service.

During discussion, Councilmember Goettl proposed adding a focus on marketing Maricopa to attract economic development, which led to council agreeing to revisit this as part of the forthcoming economic development strategic plan review.

Councilmember Liermann suggested infusing safety components into both the intentional growth and public safety sections, emphasizing a comprehensive approach to community safety and development.

Councilmember Wade recommended expanding the language in action item 4.4 to encompass a wider array of cultural experiences, reflecting the city's diverse community beyond arts alone, which led to Vice Mayor Manfredi suggesting including, "diverse cultural experiences," into the statement.

In the end, council made the following changes: Action item 3.4 was changed to read, "Ensure Maricopa's ongoing safety by advancing regional floodplain solutions." Action item 4.4 was revised to read, "To enhance Maricopa's cultural vitality, we will champion initiatives that celebrate the arts by investing in public arts projects and diverse cultural experiences." Lastly, a new action item 6.6 was agreed on, which would read, "To review and enhance our current Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify other risks and guide resilience measures."

A motion was made by Councilmember Goettl, seconded by Councilmember Liermann, that this Miscellaneous Item be Approved as Amended. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

Aye: 7 - Councilmember AnnaMarie Knorr, Councilmember Eric Goettl, Councilmember Henry Wade, Councilmember Amber Liermann, Councilmember Bob Marsh, Vice Mayor Vincent Manfredi and Mayor Nancy Smith

9. Executive Session

No executive session was conducted.

10. Adjournment

This meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Certification of Minutes

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the City Council of Maricopa, Arizona, held on the 17th day of February, 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 3rd day of March 2026.

Vanessa Bueras
City Clerk