Bluff Planning and Zoning Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 6:00 PM

6:00 PM
Roll Call P&Z Commissioners: Malia Collins (Chair), Marcia Hadenfeldt, Anne Brown, Caitlin McLennan, Brian Whitney
Town Council Representatives: Josh Ewing; Town Staff: Erin Nelson, Kristen Bushnell

Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 15, 2026, Regular Meeting
The commissioners made minor changes to the minutes including spelling and grammatical changes, as well as adding "Hadenfeldt expressed gratitude for Amanda Podmore and Ann Leppanen."
Hadenfeldt made the motion to approve the minutes as amended. Whitney seconded. Five in favor, none opposed. Meeting minutes approved.

Public Comment: None

Old Business

1. Update from Town Council

Mayor Ewing provided updates from council regarding House Bill 48 and the Onsite Wastewater draft. Ewing also provided information about the newly appointed three-member Cemetery Board. The first Cemetery Board meeting is taking place on February 10th at 1:00 pm.

2. Update from Building Department

Bushnell provided a brief update on onsite wastewater issue that was raised during the January 15th meeting. The drafted ordinance is no longer needed as the state has requirements outlined for lot sizes that have culinary water provided through a water service. The one-acre requirement was only for lots that get culinary water from a well. Minimum lot size for installation of a septic system (for lots that have access to central culinary water distribution) starts at 0.275 acres, and increases in acreage based on soil types and other considerations. This is different from the minimum lot sizes outlined in Bluff's Zoning Code, which starts at 0.50 acres for residential zoning.

New Business

3. Land Use Clearance approval: None

4. Discussion and planning for ordinance and resident resources to comply with House Bill 48 Wildland Urban Interface (Ewing)

Ewing provided information about House Bill 48 (HB 48), which passed during the 2025 legislative session and includes two primary components: State Wildfire Mitigation Fund and WUI Building Code Requirements.

The first component of HB 48 establishes a state wildfire mitigation fund. The fund is supported by fees assessed to property owners located in state-designated "super" high-risk wildfire areas. These fees are collected by counties and pooled at the state level. While landowners may reduce their assessed fees through certain mitigation efforts, fees are still required. Ewing noted that there are not any properties identified within Bluff town boundaries that are designated by the state as being in a "super" high-risk area. Ewing shared the state's wildfire risk map, explaining that darker colors indicate higher risk levels. Most of Bluff is rated at a moderate level of risk for wildfire exposure. The state recommends that any

area with a rating of five or higher be included on a WUI map. Ewing also acknowledged that the map may not be fully accurate, as at least one area designated as moderate had experienced a fire in recent years and may require further assessment.

The mitigation fund recognizes benefits such as wildfire mitigation efforts, training, and preparedness, which Ewing stated would be beneficial for Bluff.

The second component of HB 48 requires communities that participate in the Utah Wildfire Cooperative System to adopt Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) building codes for all land designated as WUI by the local government (Bluff Town Council). Bluff is a member of the Utah Wildfire Cooperative System, which functions as a partnership to help participating entities manage the financial impacts of wildfire events. Ewing stated that failure to comply with HB 48 requirements would jeopardize Bluff's continued participation in the Cooperative System. While the state has not identified any WUI/super high-risk areas within Bluff, the local entity can still identify property on their own WUI map.

Based on discussions with Fire Chief Lott and a review of wildfire exposure maps, Ewing believes that most, if not all, of Bluff would be classified as *Wildfire Urban Interface* on the map by the local government. Ewing stated that, from a long-term perspective, adopting more stringent fire codes would benefit the town by increasing overall resilience to wildfire.

Any area identified on an adopted WUI map would require landowners to comply with the WUI building codes for all new construction, as well as for major renovations. These state and nationally recognized building codes focus on fire-resistant construction elements such as siding, roofing, and other architectural features designed to reduce wildfire risk and prevent fire spread between structures. Existing structures would not be required to retrofit unless they undergo a major renovation.

Ewing requested the Planning & Zoning Commission review HB 48 requirements, develop a proposed WUI map for Bluff, hold a public hearing, and provide a recommendation to the Town Council for final consideration and approval.

Brown commented that having the entire town designated at the same wildfire risk level could reduce vulnerability for the building department. Hadenfeldt clarified with Bushnell that standard building codes focus on preventing individual structures from burning, while WUI codes address architectural elements that mitigate fire spread between structures and across neighborhoods.

Ewing explained that WUI requirements may limit certain design options, such as prohibiting materials like wood-shake siding. While these requirements may not necessarily increase construction costs, they do reduce aesthetic and material choices. He also noted that adoption of WUI codes is part of a broader, national trend, particularly across western states. Utah currently uses 2006 WUI code but is likely to adopt the 2024 WUI code.

Bushnell shared additional information regarding the financial ramifications of wildfires, including that individual landowners may be held liable for wildfire damage. Bushnell also noted that participation in the Wildfire Cooperative System includes commitments such as hosting wildfire awareness events and providing in-kind matching efforts. She further stated that designation as WUI may have implications for insurance and property resale; however, structures built to WUI standards may qualify for lower insurance rates. Ewing clarified that only properties located in state-identified high-risk WUI areas are subject to additional state fees.

Ewing also noted that House Bill 41, which may be considered during the 2026 legislative session, could modify certain WUI-related requirements in the future.

5. Discussion of Process for shared email account

Hadenfeldt discussed prior best practices and protocols for handling emails that are sent to the main email account. Whitney will begin monitoring and responding to these emails.

6. Discussion of Goals for 2026 & Joint Meeting with Town Council

Collins asked commissioners to share their ideas in the working document, which will be discussed in the joint work session with Town Council on February 19th.

Bushnell shared that she has prepared a drafted, amended Zoning Code Ordinance. She expects this editing process will take a bit of time for Planning and Zoning. The state municipal land code is linked in the drafted document. Bushnell suggested removing common definitions already found in state code and building code. There was additional information provided about the differences between Modular, Mobile, and Manufactured homes that need to be reevaluated and addressed.

Bushnell also recommended dissolving the Land Use Clearance ordinance and process entirely, now that building permits are managed in-house. All items highlighted in yellow should be reviewed thoroughly by Planning and Zoning Commissioners, as well as the Site Plan Review requirements and process.

7. Items for Next Agenda

Joint Meeting with Town Council to Discuss 2026 Goals

8. Other

In the future, all Planning and Zoning meetings will be hosted on a single Zoom link. Links are up to date on the town's website.

9. Adjourn

Hadenfeldt made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Minute Taker: Erin Nelson
Draft Minutes Published: 2/6/26
Approved: 3/5/26