

Minutes

The City of Douglas Mayor and Council met in a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., at City Hall Council Chamber, 425 10th Street. The Honorable Mayor Jose Grijalva called the meeting to order.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** 6:04 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** By Council.
3. **INVOCATION BY:** Rev. Jose Juan (JJ) Bernal - St. Stephen Episcopal Church

Following the invocation, Mayor Grijalva asked Reverend Bernal to share about his ministry.

Rev. Bernal, also known as JJ, explained he had been priest and pastor at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church for about two years, arriving in October 2023. He discussed redevelopment plans for the church following damage, expecting to start construction in January or February 2026 pending insurance adjustments. He highlighted their monthly community lunch and conversation held the first Saturday of each month, open to everyone at no cost, with no specific political or religious topics - "You are the topic. The people who are present is the topic." He noted they typically have 15-30 attendees and invited everyone to the next event on October 4th, which is also the day of St. Francis of Assisi. Mayor Grijalva guaranteed the quality of the food served at these events.

4. **ROLL CALL.**

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
MAYOR, JOSE GRIJALVA	X	
MAYOR PRO TEMPORE, DANYA ACOSTA	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, MELISSA RODRIGUEZ	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, JOSE MONTANO	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RAY SHELTON		X (Excused)
COUNCILMEMBER, TERRY DILLMAN	X	
COUNCILMEMBER, RICHARD C. ACOSTA	X	
CITY MANAGER, ANA URQUIJO	X	
CITY ATTORNEY, DENIS FITZGIBBONS	X	
CITY TREASURER, ALEJANDRO MARTINEZ	X	
CITY CLERK, ALMA ANDRADE	X	

5. **EVENTS UPDATE.**

A video presentation highlighted upcoming events including the Mexican Baseball Fiesta on October 1st at Copper King Stadium (tickets online only - \$20 box seats, \$15 general admission), Una Noche de Mariachi on Saturday at Raul Castro 10th Street Park from 6-10 PM, and the annual Halloween Trunk or Treat featuring "Hawkins Chronicles."

Another video covered fall and winter aquatics programs, including continuing water aerobics, November swim lessons (registration opening November 3rd), a haunted night at 8th Street pool showing "Insidious" on October 11th, and regular open swim hours at Douglas Municipal Pool.

The library's September activities were announced, including Monday relaxing activities for all ages, Tuesday STEAM club celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, Wednesday movies with free popcorn, Thursday story time for ages 5 and under, fall paint night for adults on September 19th, and library card sign-up month with prizes for first-time child cardholders.

6. **MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER UPDATES AND/OR REPORTS.**

Council Member Richard Acosta announced a Q&A session for Ward 6 constituents on September 20th from 10-11 AM at Douglas Golf Course. He also congratulated the library for being voted #1 for customer service and #1 for nonprofit in the Best of Douglas annual Cochise County awards.

Council Member Montañó thanked all city staff involved with the groundbreaking ceremony, calling it an amazing event that made Douglas look good. He also thanked Ministerios Tierra de Bendicion for their facility.

Council Member Rodriguez agreed the event was a huge success and thanked city staff, Mrs. Urquijo and Mr. Pedroza for their work on the Port of Entry Project. She announced plans for a Ward 1 meet and greet in early October.

Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta recapped the Arizona League of Cities and Towns conference, highlighting Mayor Grijalva's presentation of a resolution on absentee ownership of historic properties that is moving forward through the legislative process. She mentioned missing the groundbreaking due to her commitment to the Flinn Brown Civic Leadership Academy but heard it was a great success with the mayor doing an excellent job as emcee. Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta then addressed recent violence in the news, emphasizing that differences should not separate people and the community needs to accept each other and work together despite differences, setting an example of no tolerance for hate.

Mayor Grijalva provided extensive updates. Regarding the League of Cities and Towns conference, he participated in a panel on "Partnering for Small Town Strategies for Economic Development" moderated by Superior Mayor Mila Villalobos, with Winslow Mayor Bertie Cano and Keith Watkins from Arizona Commerce Authority. He noted important networking opportunities, particularly with Mr. Watkins who offered to connect vacant Douglas buildings with businesses seeking locations. Mayor Grijalva mentioned receiving positive feedback from smaller towns about Douglas's growing attention.

He discussed his "Chat with the Mayor" at the Episcopal Church, praising the best cheesecake he had ever had and noting conversations with the building architect about promoting Douglas. He attended an orchestra event the next night and encouraged public attendance at such cultural events.

Regarding the groundbreaking ceremony, Mayor Grijalva praised staff who worked until 9:00 p.m. the night before and successfully pivoted locations without attendees noticing. He particularly thanked Senator Mark Kelly for not only attending but spending the entire day in Douglas, including events at Cilantros, visiting Tilted Luck to talk with local businesses, and staying for the football game coin flip - noting this level of engagement was unprecedented for a U.S. Senator and helped build important relationships.

Additionally, Mayor Grijalva reported on a Sonoran mayors meeting in Nacozari de Garcia, anticipating sister city agreements with Cananea and others beyond existing partner Nacozari. He emphasized these partnerships don't require much money but focus on mutual promotion for tourism and trade to maximize the port of entry's potential.

Council Member Dillman reported attending the University of Arizona Extension program open house, impressed by their wonderful programs and desire to serve Cochise County and Douglas schools.

Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta returned to address recent shootings and stabbings, emphasizing that differences shouldn't separate people. She stressed everyone goes home to family, regardless of views, and the community needs to accept each other, work together despite differences, and set an example that there's no tolerance for hate, especially given children are watching.

Mayor Grijalva concluded by affirming council's shared goal to advance Douglas so everyone can stay and build it up, noting that while they may disagree at times, their heart and love is for their city and constituents.

7. PROCLAMATIONS.

A. MESOTHELIOMA AWARENESS DAY.

Mayor Grijalva read a proclamation declaring September 26, 2025, as Mesothelioma Awareness Day, detailing the aggressive cancer's connection to asbestos exposure, its impact on military personnel, construction workers, and first responders, the 12% five-year survival rate, and the need for public awareness and effective treatments. He thanked Karen Cox, wife of Bisbee Fire Chief Tim Cox, for advocating for the proclamation and bringing attention to this public health issue.

B. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH.

Mayor Grijalva then read a proclamation declaring October 2025 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, citing statistics including over 10 million adults experiencing domestic violence annually, its status as the leading cause of injury to women aged 15-44, the 1,543 lives lost in Arizona from 2009-2023, and the importance of promoting healthy, respectful relationships. He emphasized that domestic violence affects both women and men who are someone's children, parents, or siblings, urging the community to be their brother's keeper and speak up to protect each other.

8. PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL IN WRITING OR VERBALLY ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA.

- Eric Braverman of 1101 G Ave, Douglas, AZ, commented on the museum's expansion to display 1,000 Last Suppers and anticipated significant positive press coverage. He reported London Film School would send a six-person crew for 2.5 weeks in October to make a movie about the museum as part of their curriculum, which would go to film festivals worldwide. He invited council members who had not visited to come see the museum (open daily except Monday), expressed gladness about Council Member Dillman's appointment, and publicly thanked Council Member Michael Baldenegro for being a big supporter of the museum in multiple ways. Mr. Braverman noted Baldenegro's health issues, possibly related to asbestos exposure from Navy firefighting experiments. He praised the councilwoman's message about not hating each other, noting political arguments used to be fun but are now "just a mess." He thanked council for their service.
- Alex Boneo of 1103 3rd Street, Douglas, AZ, representing Arizona Border Alliance, introduced the local nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to essential resources, promoting opportunity, strengthening community connections, and fostering sustainable development. He explained their mission to connect and promote existing resources, believing Douglas's main problem isn't lack of resources but lack of awareness about them. The organization aims to unite the community and make Douglas a better place to live. Ms. Boneo mentioned applying for community funds later on the agenda and thanked council for considering supporting the local agency. With 20 years of community work experience, she expressed commitment to the project and offered to return for a more detailed presentation.
- Dominic Curran introduced himself as the new golf course superintendent who moved to Douglas five weeks prior. Born in Phoenix, graduated from CDO High School in Tucson, and attended Western New Mexico University, he has 25 years in the golf business. He expressed commitment to completing the project council has invested in and appreciation for the open arms from the community and city employees. He looked forward to achieving the goals set by council and the city manager.

Mayor Grijalva noted meeting Curran on his first day during orientation and appreciated his knowledge and excitement about the growing community amenity.

9. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVAL of CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. **EXPENDITURES** for the month of **AUGUST 2025** totaling **\$3,389,465.99**.
- B. **MEETING MINUTES** for **AUGUST 2025**.
- C. **CONTRACT AWARD** for **PURCHASING CARD SERVICES**.
- D. **BID AWARD** for the **WEST DOUGLAS UTILITIES EXPANSION - SR-80**.
- E. **COMMUNITY FUNDING REQUEST**.
- F. **RESOLUTION NO. 25-1691**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **APPROVING** and **ADOPTING** the **STATE of ARIZONA CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST** statutes as the city's **CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST POLICY** and a **CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM** for use by all city officials and employees.

Motion by Council Member D. Acosta, second by Council Member Rodriguez to approve the consent agenda items as presented.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Terry Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

10. DISCUSSION/DECISION on APPROVALS.

A. **SECOND READING OF ORDINANCE NO. 25-1216**, an Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **AMENDING CHAPTER 8.28** of the **DOUGLAS MUNICIPAL CODE** specifically as to section 8.28.040(f) relating to **CONSTRUCTION RELATED NOISE**, establishing severability of components of ordinance; and establishing an effective date thereof.

Chief Fullen explained that Senate Bill 1182 was signed by Governor Hobbs on May 13, 2025, and codified under Arizona Revised Statute 9-500.52. The bill restricts municipalities from enacting or enforcing noise ordinances that prohibit general construction activities between May 1st and October 15th each year between 5 AM and 7 PM on business days, 7 AM to 7 PM on Saturdays, as long as work is performed under a valid permit. Additionally, concrete pouring must be allowed at least one hour before regular construction activities begin..

Mayor Grijalva clarified this was basically for worker safety during the hot season.

Motion by Council Member Rodriguez, second by Council Member D. Acosta to approve the second reading of Ordinance No. 25-1216.

Roll call: Voted in Favor: Mayor Jose Grijalva, Council Members: Melissa Rodriguez, Jose Montañó, Danya Acosta, Terry Dillman, and Richard Acosta. Voted Against: None.

11. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION.

A. CODE ENFORCEMENT – STATISTICS and PROCESSES

Ms. Gonzalez presented code enforcement statistics and processes at Mayor Grijalva's request from the August 13, 2025, meeting. She referenced a January 8, 2025, presentation on alleys that focused on challenges and the current state of alley cleanups, including public education efforts and a video informing the public that alleys and adjacent rights-of-way are property owners' responsibility to maintain.

Ms. Gonzalez explained code enforcement falls under Douglas Municipal Code Chapter 8.32, which defines nuisances, litter, and abandoned vehicles, provides purpose and scope, and allows enforcement activities for violations.

Current enforcement data showed ongoing efforts with enforcement and education, including informational videos and verbal/written education to property owners about their responsibilities. The goal is to avoid violation notices and citations. Major challenges include absentee and/or deceased owners, vacant or abandoned buildings/parcels often used by homeless people or squatters without utilities, leading to accumulation of trash, debris, and junk.

Statistics from January through July 2025 showed: 162 violation notices issued, 16 working without building permits, 5 citations, 78 alleys cleaned by the blight crew, 246 contacts for voluntary compliance, 79 right-of-way/ditch/graffiti cleanups, and 195 vehicle tow stickers placed. The community service officer from Douglas Police Department contributed with 195 vehicle tow stickers, 2 burglary/theft responses, 8 traffic accident reports, 8 vehicles towed, 51 parking violations issued, 6 criminal damage reports, and 30 escorts provided.

The code enforcement process involves contacting property owner/tenant about violations, allowing reasonable time for voluntary compliance, sending violation notices if needed, issuing citations through justice court if violations persist, and potentially beginning the abatement process if violations continue.

The abatement process under Douglas Municipal Code 8.32.310 includes: considering factors like cost and property value, pulling title reports to check for liens, preparing abatement notices listing violations, sending notices by certified mail, posting 30-day notices on properties if no response, providing courtesy notifications to neighbors, allowing 15 days for appeal requests, and proceeding with abatement after 30 days if no appeal. Once

complete, the city files a notice of claim and lien with Cochise County Recorder's Office for costs incurred. An emergency abatement process also exists under code 8.32.03.

Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta asked about getting voluntary compliance, noting the lengthy and potentially costly abatement process.

Ms. Gonzalez indicated they weren't finding it difficult, with 246 verbal contacts resulting in only 5 citations. Regarding alley cleanup compliance, Ms. Gonzalez explained they hired a blight crew in 2024 with a goal of cleaning 100 alleys annually (approximately 400 in total in the city for a 4-year rotation cycle). Many lifelong Douglas residents still don't know it's their responsibility to clean alleys, requiring better education campaigns. They plan annual reminders and internal staff collaboration during off-seasons.

Ms. Urquijo added that seasonal weed spraying would help sterilize alleys over time, reducing 6-foot weeds during monsoon season. She emphasized the holistic effort needed, including educating constituents about special pickup services for large items to prevent illegal dumping. Progress would continue to be reported over time.

Mayor Pro Tempore Acosta suggested council should help spread the message about property owner responsibilities for alleyways, encouraging collective effort since it shouldn't be the city's sole responsibility.

Council Member Montaño asked if the community service officer was the only person handling enforcement.

In response, Ms. Gonzalez explained they have two code enforcement positions (one limited status), but due to staffing challenges, one position also handles planning/zoning technician duties and building inspections, while another recently took on right-of-way permitting. They effectively operate with about one code enforcement officer plus the community service officer.

Council Member Montaño also asked about junk vehicles in front yards.

Ms. Gonzalez confirmed the code addresses this as blight but faces challenges when vehicles are on private property. The code limits improved parking to 50% of front yards, but enforcement is difficult with outdated codes when junked vehicles don't exceed that percentage.

Mayor Grijalva explained his reason for requesting the presentation was observations along 14th Street, particularly between A Avenue and Bonita near schools, where a house had trash bags in the front yard, trash in the driveway, and tree-sized weeds in the backyard - conditions persisting nearly a month since his August 12th complaint. He expressed concern about the impression on potential new residents and school families. He also noted a truck blocking the sidewalk on 12th Street between D and E, forcing wheelchair users into the street.

Additionally, Mayor Grijalva suggested the city needs to address obvious violations like trash bags, sidewalk parking, and ATVs on sidewalks, especially near schools. He proposed potentially contracting someone or hiring limited status employees to report obvious violations.

Regarding the specific property with trash bags, Ms. Gonzalez explained the challenge was a deceased owner with no legal transfer of ownership, though someone recently began cleaning up after apparently renting or buying it.

Ms. Urquijo encouraged council members to serve as expanded eyes and ears for staff, mentioning the concerns@douglasaz.gov email established for community concerns. She acknowledged their limited staff (2.5 positions, often less) compared to Douglas's expansive blight problem, appreciating when council sends texts and photos to help address issues. She noted challenges with private property authority but emphasized continuing to find solutions together.

Mayor Grijalva suggested hosting ribbon cuttings for the asphalt plant, golf course, and other achievements to celebrate everything.

Ms. Gonzalez closed by highlighting the recently revamped Development Services webpage with interactive features and posted videos, crediting staff member Yasmin for the graphics work.

12. CITY MANAGER REPORTS.

Ms. Urquijo echoed appreciation for the team's daily efforts across all departments.

She recapped the Douglas Commercial and Port of Entry groundbreaking event's success despite venue changes and last-minute program changes when the governor and senator cancelled due to weather. Staff across departments went above and beyond, making the event shine for the community, nation, and bi-nationally. A "Douglas in Motion" celebration for staff is planned to recognize their extraordinary contributions. The event had bi-national press coverage and made positive impact with over 200 dignitaries attending. Work continues utility corridor funding and ADOT partnership for the connector road, with design engineering at 60% complete (due September 19th) and expected full funding through congressional directed spending requests.

The downtown streetscape project's 100% construction documents were submitted, with bid publishing expected this week and award anticipated at an October council meeting (possibly special). The 8–10-month project timeline will be updated as steps progress.

Ross's grand opening ribbon cutting is scheduled for October 11th at 8:45 AM with public invited.

West Nile virus testing conducted August 31–September 6 showed negative results for mosquito-borne viruses including West Nile, St. Louis encephalitis, and dengue. Three departments collaborate on mitigation, looking for standing water. A special website page encourages community reporting of standing water puddles.

The CDBG project will add curb, gutter, and sidewalks on 15th Street from Washington to Airport Road, enhancing connections from neighborhoods to parks per council's vision.

Well #18 on 15th Street will begin pump testing September 22nd with temporary pipes to storm sewers, closing the north sidewalk between Estrella and A Avenue for about seven days.

The asphalt plant has all components on site with footings under construction. Gas and electric service applications are in process. The flatbed truck arrived for the new striping machine with staff training conducted.

The 20th and 23rd Street annexation becomes effective September 12th, with immediate fire and police services, garbage pickup beginning September 22nd, and temporary street improvements with millings until permanent improvements after sewer installation (design beginning this year).

The Fire Department's 24th anniversary of 9/11 remembrance ceremony is Thursday, September 11th at 9 AM with community invited.

The library received recognition as #1 for customer service and #1 nonprofit in the Best of Douglas annual Cochise County awards.

Upcoming meetings include Design Review Board September 11th and Planning & Zoning Commission September 15th, both at 6 PM in council chambers.

New Golf Superintendent Dominic Curran received praise for hitting the ground running, earning community compliments and a standing ovation at the 90th Labor Day tournament for his accomplishments in such short time.

13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS FROM MAYOR AND COUNCIL.

No future agenda items were requested.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion by Council Member D. Acosta, second by Council Member Montaña to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Prepared by:
Alma Andrade, City Clerk

