



**VILLAGE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MEETING TO BE HELD VIA HYBRID - IN PERSON AND ONLINE
MEETING ROOM LOCATED AT 102, 9 FIREHOUSE RD.
TAOS SKI VALLEY, NEW MEXICO
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2026 AT 1:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND NOTICE OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the Village Council was called to order by Mayor Chris Stanek at 1:00 pm. Notice of the meeting was properly posted.

2. ROLL CALL

Marlene Salazar, Village Clerk, called the roll and a quorum was present.

Governing Body Present:

Mayor Chris Stanek
Councilman Matt Myers
Councilman Doug Turner
Councilman Chris Stagg
Councilman Tom Wittman

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner **PASSED:** 4-0

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 16, 2026 REGULAR VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Myers **PASSED:** 4-0

5. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Oath of Office Henri Hammond-Paul (Henri Hammond-Paul, Village Administrator, hhammondpaul@vtsv.org)

Marlene Salazar, Village Clerk performed the Oath of Office and swore in Village Administrator Henri Hammond-Paul.

6. CITIZEN'S FORUM

- A. Discussion of non-agenda items only. Limited to 5 minutes per person. Please email msalazar@vtsv.org to sign up in advance so that you can be recognized.

Resident Mike Fitzpatrick spoke during the Citizens Forum Part A., stating that due to the inability to finance the completion of the Electrical Services Underground Project, it is not "feasible" to continue to make all previously agreed-upon contributions to the TIDD. Mr. Fitzpatrick reported the completion of the Electrical Underground Project is of paramount importance to the health and safety of the residents of the Village of Taos Ski Valley. Mr. Mike Fitzpatrick recommended the Village of Taos Ski Valley should, unilaterally, pause all contributions to the TIDD and instruct and inform the relevant parties that it

will pause the Ad Valorem Tax Contributions. Mr. Fitzpatrick stated this will provide in excess of Two Hundred Thousand dollars per annum to the Franchise Fee Account which finances the Electrical Underground Project. Mr. Fitzpatrick recommended that the Village acts upon this request in hopes the projected thirteen-year completion will be significantly reduced as a result of this source of funds being utilized for this high priority Village Project.

- B. Limit of 5 minutes per person related to a specific agenda item. Public comment during consideration of agenda items by the Council is only permitted at the discretion of the Chair and is limited and those directly affected.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Planning & Zoning Commission (Mayor Pro Tem Tom Wittman)

Board Chair Wittman reported that a meeting was held on February 2, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. During this session, the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Board passed a resolution in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, establishing the official schedule for future Commission meetings. Additionally, the Chair reviewed terms of office with each commissioner, all of whom formally agreed to continue their service. Furthermore, the Board nominated and approved Mr. Wittman to continue as Chair of the P&Z Board of Commissioners. Board Chair Wittman reported ensuring continuity of operations, the P&Z Board appointed Henri Hammond-Paul (Village Administrator) to serve as Acting Code Official. During this interim period, the Board of Commissioners will assume direct responsibility for reviewing and approving all building permits and variances. This expanded governance will remain in effect until the vacancy for the Planning & Community Development Director is filled. The next meeting of the P&Z Board is scheduled for March 2, 2026, at 1:00 pm.

- B. Public Safety Committee (Committee Chair Henry Caldwell)

Committee Chair Caldwell reported that the committee met on February 2, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. and discussed various subjects like the underground electric project. The Chair noted significant concern regarding the project's projected 13-year timeline and led a discussion on strategies to expedite completion. Despite the challenges of short construction seasons, the committee explored the feasibility of drafting an emergency resolution. Such a resolution would formally establish the project's urgency and serve as a mechanism to secure the funding necessary for an accelerated schedule.

- C. Firewise Community Board (Committee Chair Henry Caldwell)

Committee Chair Caldwell reported that the Firewise Community Board convened on February 2, 2026. Garrett Hanson (ENSO Wildland) presented several strategies for generating additional revenue, including pending grant applications and the potential implementation of fire mitigation fees. These proposed fees—ranging from \$25.00 to \$1,000.00 based on property type and size—aim to provide a consistent funding stream for the Fire Department. Research into similar municipal programs suggests these fees effectively support lot maintenance and encourage owner accountability for abandoned properties. The Committee also addressed the issue of "dead and downed" lots, specifically focusing on overgrown vegetation. Discussion centered on the enforceability of these conditions under the Village Council's recently adopted maintenance code. Additionally, the Board reviewed the impact of lot maintenance on homeowners' insurance, the necessity of burying propane tanks, and the removal of de-energized utility lines. The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Discussion: The Mayor and Council consulted with Chair Caldwell on strategies to enforce compliance for underground electrical hookups. Discussion focused on ensuring residents complete necessary transitions in a timely manner once infrastructure in their area is finalized.

D. Parks & Recreation Committee (Committee Chair Joan Woodard)

Committee Chair Woodard reported that the Parks and Recreation Committee met on January 27, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. to discuss ongoing comprehensive planning efforts and drafting and updating the Village Comprehensive Plan. To date, the Committee has conducted seven stakeholder meetings and three open community meetings, with two additional sessions scheduled for March 2026. An accompanying online survey has successfully facilitated community engagement, yielding significant input regarding the Village's future direction.

Key priorities identified include trail improvements, the development of additional trails, and enhanced signage and information systems. Other critical topics addressed were trail maintenance, the installation of dog waste stations, and the creation of connector trails. The Committee also discussed traffic management, parking congestion, and hiker safety. Significant mapping progress has been made, and a draft of the Comprehensive Plan is expected by late April. Additionally, the Committee is working to update the Village's vision statement, a goal supported by the Council as an affordable investment in community enhancement.

E. Lodger's Tax Advisory Board (Councilman Chris Stagg)

No meeting no report

F. TIDD (Mayor Pro Tem Tom Wittman)

TIDD Board Chair Tom Wittman reported that the Tax Increment Development District (TIDD) Board convened on January 19, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. During the meeting, the Board nominated and unanimously approved Mr. Wittman to continue his tenure as Board Chair.

In the Developer Update, Mr. Chaz Rockey discussed the TIDD spending cap, noting that while it is currently set at \$44 million, inflationary adjustments are applicable. Mr. Rockey recommended increasing the cap to \$60 million. The Board addressed the upcoming departure of Mr. Rockey and recommended the appointment of Kris De Vogelaere as the new Financial Advisor. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

Administrative Clarification: Mayor Stanek clarified for the record that the Village of Taos Ski Valley does not hold jurisdictional authority over the TIDD Board regarding its administration, personnel changes, or financial decisions. This was corroborated by Village Attorney Appel, who confirmed the TIDD is a self-governing body.

8. MAYOR'S REPORT

A. Mayor's Report (Mayor Chris Stanek)

"Mayor Stanek officially welcomed Henri Hammond-Paul as the new Village Administrator today, who was also sworn into office. Mayor Stanek expressed his gratitude to Committee Chair Caldwell and the Public Safety/Firewise Committee for their critical work in highlighting the urgency of wildfire mitigation and underground electrical infrastructure—concerns underscored by recent wind-related tree falls and utility damage. Consequently, Mayor Stanek has directed Administrator Hammond-Paul to submit a comprehensive Wildfire Mitigation Plan within 60 days, detailing prioritized, actionable steps within the Village's operational capacity."

9. ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Administrator and Staff Reports (Henri Hammond-Paul, Village Administrator, hhammondpaul@vtsv.org)

Village Administrator Henri Hammond-Paul expressed his appreciation to the Mayor, Village Council, and staff for their support during his transition. Mr. Hammond-Paul identified his primary administrative objectives as the optimization of government operations, budgetary oversight, and the development of a long-term community vision. He also extended formal thanks to former Administrator Rick Bellis for facilitating an efficient leadership transition.

Mr. Hammond-Paul reported on extensive interagency outreach conducted over the past two weeks, including consultations with State Forestry, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Taos County, the Town of Taos, and the municipalities of Red River and Questa. Additionally, he met with representatives from the Taos Regional Landfill Board and the VTSV Chamber of Commerce to strengthen regional partnerships.

Discussion: In response to an inquiry from Mayor Stanek regarding the Taos County E-911 system, Mr. Hammond-Paul reported that Taos County has elected to pause the distribution of a county-wide Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) previously shared with the Town of Red River, the Town of Taos, the Village of Questa, and the Village of Taos Ski Valley.

Mr. Hammond-Paul met with the County Manager and Finance Director to assess the fiscal impact of this decision on the Village. He emphasized that while the Village is advocating for its residents' safety, it remains committed to maintaining symbiotic regional relationships, noting that equitable funding improves the resilience of all area municipalities. Currently, the County has moved to reduce the GRT allocation for all municipalities; specifically, the Village of Taos Ski Valley's allocation will decrease from 10% to 6.5%. Further negotiations and discussions regarding these GRT adjustments are scheduled with the County for March.

Councilor Stagg recommended that the Village establish a formal billing structure and obtain the necessary licensure to seek reimbursement for ambulance transportation services. Councilor Stagg noted that the Village currently provides patient transport without a corresponding revenue stream, resulting in uncompensated wear and tear on emergency vehicles.

It was emphasized that implementing a billing model is essential to offset maintenance costs and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Village's ambulance fleet and emergency response capabilities.

10. FINANCE REPORT

A. Finance Report (Carroll Griesedieck, Village Finance Officer)

Finance Director Griesedieck expressed appreciation to Councilor Turner for providing essential support with the Capital Outlay requests and associated documentation.

Regarding Water and Sewer revenues, Director Griesedieck noted a temporary delay in January billing due to the implementation of the new utility billing system, which resulted in a subsequent delay in payment receipts. Despite this transition period, Water and Sewer revenues increased by 9% and continue to show a consistent growth trend of 20% to 25% over previous years.

Director Griesedieck further reported that a technical issue within the new billing utility—specifically a multiplier error—has been identified and resolved. System testing is ongoing to ensure future billing accuracy.

Finally, Finance Director Griesedieck reported on current revenue trends for the fiscal year. Noting, Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) revenues have experienced a consistent 24% decrease compared to the previous fiscal year. In contrast, revenues from Lodgers' Tax and Property Taxes remain stable, showing no significant variance from the prior year's figures.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

This item is placed on the agenda so that the Governing Body, by unanimous consent, can designate those routine agenda items that they wish to be approved or acknowledged by one motion. If any proposal does not meet with the approval of all Governing Body members, that item will be heard

when reached under the regular agenda.

- A. **RESOLUTION 2026-006 - A RESOLUTION REQUESTING A BUDGET ADJUSTMENT (BAR) TO THE FY2026 BUDGET INCREASING BUDGETED REVENUE IN THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FUND TO REFLECT FY26 FIRE PROTECTION VOLUNTEER STIPEND GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED.**

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner **PASSED:** 4-0

- B. **RESOLUTION 2026-007 - A RESOLUTION CONCERNING PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEETINGS AND PUBLIC NOTICE REQUIRED**

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Turner **PASSED:** 4-0

12. OLD BUSINESS

(None)

13. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Authorization to Proceed with a Targeted Update to the Village Master Plan (Henri Hammond-Paul, Village Administrator, hhammondpaul@vtsv.org)

MOTION: Councilor Stagg **SECOND:** Councilor Wittman **PASSED:** 4-0

A motion was made and approved to proceed with a targeted update to the Village Master Plan. Councilor Wittman reported that the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commissioners have expressed their commitment to supporting this initiative.

Councilor Wittman informed the Council that while a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for the project, the submitted bids exceeded the established budget. The Village has allocated \$70,000 for the update, whereas the RFP responses were quoted at approximately \$150,000. The Village Administrator, Mayor & Council discussed the necessity of reconciling the project scope with available funding.

- B. **APPOINTMENT OF A VILLAGE CODE OFFICIAL - Designation of the Village Administrator as Acting the Code Official/Code Enforcement Officer for the Village of Taos Ski Valley for the purpose of enforcing the codes, ordinances, and regulations of the Village, as promulgated by the governing body, to include the Village nuisance, zoning and land use codes. (Henri Hammond-Paul, Village Administrator, hhammondpaul@vtsv.org)**

MOTION: Councilor Myers **SECOND:** Councilor Wittman **PASSED:** 4-0

14. OTHER BUSINESS

(None)

15. LEGAL UPDATES/STATUS REPORT

Attorney Appel reported no reports

16. POSSIBLE CLOSED SESSION

The following matters may or may not be discussed in closed session under the NM Open Public

Meetings Act under exemptions 10-15-1.H (8): meetings for the discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property or water rights by a public body, 10-15-1. H (7): attorney client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the public body is or may become a participant, and 10-15-1.H (2) limited personnel matters.

(No closed session)

17. REPORT ON CLOSED SESSION

(John Appel, Village Attorney)

18. MISCELLANEOUS

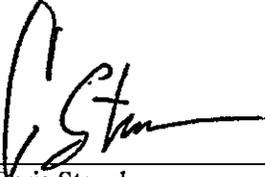
(None)

19. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE, TIME & PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

03/20/2026-REGULAR MEETING. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council of the Village of Taos Ski Valley will be held as a hybrid in-person and on-line meeting on March 20, 2026, at 1:00 pm in Room 102, 9 Firehouse Rd., Taos Ski Valley, NM and the Agenda, Agenda attachments, and Zoom Meeting link will be available to the public on the Village website at <https://www.vtsv.org>.

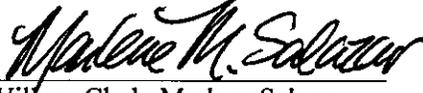
20. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Councilor Wittman **SECOND:** Councilor Stagg **PASSED:** 4-0



Mayor Chris Stanek

ATTEST:



Village Clerk, Marlene Salazar