

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
6:30 PM, DONALD E. CARROLL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
April 28, 2026**

**SHARON MCDONALD, MAYOR
JOSHUA RARDIN, MAYOR PRO-TEM
BAXTER PATTILLO, COMMISSIONER
STEPHEN BURNETT, COMMISSIONER
WARREN ROBINSON, COMMISSIONER**

**VACANT, COMMISSIONER
MARK TAPLEY, COMMISSIONER
STEPHANIE HERNANDEZ, ACTING CITY
MANAGER
DARRELL MORI, CITY ATTORNEY
RACHEL HUGHS, CITY CLERK**

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:29 PM. Roll Call was taken by the City Clerk. City Clerk Hughs announced there was a quorum present.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Invocation was given by Pastor K. R. Senn of the Borean Independent Baptist Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Robinson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Commissioner Robinson moved to approve.
Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Tamara Hansen said she was the President of the local AFSCME, #3818, which is the City's Worker's Union. What is happening with the Golf Course Maintenance Workers is wrong. Jobs are at stake; the process was not handled as it should have been. Workers were told their jobs were being outsourced, before the Union was given the opportunity to do what the contract requires us to do, which is review the proposal, evaluate the costs, and discuss alternatives. Those protections were not put in place by accident. They exist because taking public work away from employees is a serious decision. It affects workers, families, service quality, and the taxpayers of Alamogordo. Since then, the City has tried to step back and reframe the process. The Union has now received an RFP and financial information. However, paperwork after the fact does not fix the problem if the process is still not transparent, complete, and fair. Right now, it is not. We still do not have a true apples-to-apples cost comparison. We do not have a clear demonstration that outsourcing this work will actually save the taxpayer's money once real costs are counted. We still do not have a clear explanation of what service levels may be lost, or what costs will remain with the City, what oversight will be required, or why pushing out experienced local workers is somehow good policy. This is not just a labor issue; it is a public accountability issue. If the City is going to take good jobs out of this community, and place a public asset into private hands, and risk lower service on property the public values, then the burden is on the City to prove that the decision is justified. Not with assumptions, incomplete numbers, or after workers have been told their livelihoods are on the line. These local workers are City workers. They are part of this community, spend wages here, have families here, and have taken pride in maintaining the Desert Lakes Golf Course for the people of Alamogordo. I am asking the Commission tonight to slow this process down, require a real cost comparison, require a real alternatives discussion, and ensure that the rules negotiated are actually followed. If this Commission allows public jobs to be pushed aside without a complete and honest review, then you are not just making a management decision, but you are also sending a message about what kind of city Alamogordo wants to be. We are asking you to choose fairness, transparency, and the workers and community that have served the City faithfully.
2. Kim Great White Owl Murillo said the community was misled. On March 10th, we witnessed a 7-0-0 vote to negotiate a contract with Acting City Manager Dr. Hernandez. We thought the revolving door of leadership had finally stopped spinning, and that our voices had been heard. Six weeks have passed. As reported in Second Life Media, the vote appears to be a shell game. This Commission has retreated into Executive Closed Sessions, like tonight. I demand that you honor your vote and the people's voice. Execute the contract with Dr. Hernandez.
3. Rudy A. Contreras said he wished to advocate for Acting City Manager Hernandez for the position of City Manager. You have spent thousands searching for a less qualified candidate, and are now spending thousands more to see her out the door. She is the most qualified candidate that this Commission, and prior ones, have ever seen.
4. Thaddeus Gilmore said he was a proud member of the Union, and was here to stand for our jobs and the

community. I would say no thank you to eliminating public sector, Union jobs. These are good opportunities. I think it is a huge mistake. By letting this out of your hands, you are asking for trouble. Most of the heavy lifting has already been done. What is the benefit of cutting anyone else in at this point? The best idea I have seen is to take full control of the Golf Course for yourselves. Add new City positions and Union jobs. Finish improvements you want done. Any contractor, large or small, can only take away from this equation. None of them is smarter, more capable, or cares as much as your folks do. We have all the experts, technology, and credentials that any of these guys have. Let's take this bull by the horns and get this done.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Acting City Manager Hernandez made the following remarks:

1. Budget Hearings are Monday, May 4th, and Tuesday, May 5th at 5:30 PM. They are open to the public. The budget books will be emailed out to you tomorrow, and a hard copy will be in your boxes by Thursday morning.
2. I'd like to introduce the newest member of our Leadership Dream Team, Shelley Dowhanik-Baron, our Community Development Director. Shelley brings decades of experience in municipal engineering, infrastructure planning, and land use, with deep expertise in planning and zoning, development review, and regulatory coordination. She has successfully led large-scale, multidisciplinary projects across water, wastewater, transportation, and solid waste systems. Shelley combines strong technical knowledge with a collaborative, community-focused approach, helping guide thoughtful, strategic growth for the City of Alamogordo. Also starting the first week in May, Mrs. Esther Sherman, our new Civil Engineer. Esther brings a strong background in systems engineering, infrastructure development, and large-scale project management, with experience supporting complex federal and military programs. She has led multimillion-dollar infrastructure initiatives, managed procurement and contract processes, and worked closely with cross-functional teams to deliver efficient, mission-critical projects. With her technical expertise and strategic approach, she will be a valuable asset in advancing the City's infrastructure and engineering priorities. I will be forwarding the status of the projects to you, but also forwarding to the media and on social media. We will be doing our quarterly project report in May.

REMARKS AND INQUIRIES BY THE CITY COMMISSION

Commissioner Burnett asked about the status of Grant's contract with the State. Acting City Manager Hernandez said that the contract can be extended, but it needs to be for a defined term. In order to have a defined term, we need to work with the management company to determine how long they will need. We need to work that process out in the transition plan. Commissioner Burnett said he wished to ensure the transition plan went smoothly and was not being rushed. I know that Grant sent out an email talking about other things. I want to get that handled, so there is no interruption in service.

Mayor McDonald said last Friday, the Acting City Manager and I were at Holloman Air Force Base. That will be the last meeting with Colonel Etheridge and Chief Ford with the City of Alamogordo. The Colonel is being transferred to another base and will be leaving on May 8th. Chief Ford will be retiring. We are sad to see them go, and we had a great partnership. A new Colonel and Chief will come in next month, and I look forward to meeting them.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the minutes for the Regular Commission Meeting on April 14, 2026, and the Special Commission Meeting on April 21, 2026. *(Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)*
2. Approve the statements related to the Executive Closed Session of the Special Meeting held on April 21, 2026. *(Rachel Hughs, City Clerk)*
3. Consider, and act upon, acceptance of a grant agreement between the State of New Mexico, Department of Transportation and the City of Alamogordo, in the amount of \$108,900, to plan, design, renovate and construct the White Sands regional airport, including the electrical systems. *(Debbie Osborne, Grant Coordinator)*

Commissioner Hernandez asked to pull Item 3 off. Mayor McDonald said it would be pulled for further discussion.

**Commissioner Burnett moved to approve Items 1 and 2.
Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.**

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

3. Consider, and act upon, acceptance of a grant agreement between the State of New Mexico, Department of Transportation and the City of Alamogordo, in the amount of \$108,900, to plan, design, renovate and construct the White Sands regional airport, including the electrical systems. (Debbie Osborne, Grant Coordinator)

Finance Director Huff said this was a grant that came from the legislature. This year, any of the legislature allocations regarding transportation, instead of going through DFA, are going through DOT. This is one of the first we bring that says DOT instead. This is to renovate the electrical vault at the Airport. Commissioner Hernandez asked if this was to do the work or study it. Finance Director Huff said to do the work. Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin asked what the electrical vault would be for. Is it just for all the lightning? Finance Director Huff said it has the controls for lighting and runway controls. It is currently a rat's nest of wires. This was our number two project at the last legislation because it needed to be done. Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin said so this was for ICIP. Finance Director Huff said yes. We cannot upgrade other items down the line until we upgrade the electrical. Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin asked if the amount was enough to do this. Finance Director Huff said yes. We are not running a bunch of conduit. We need to do the panels, switches, and everything in the vault.

**Commissioner Hernandez moved to approve.
Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.**

NEW BUSINESS

4. Discussion on the RFP for the Golf Course. (Stephen Burnett, Commissioner)

Commissioner Burnett asked why they had received legal advice that they should not be talking about this. City Attorney Mori said that because we are in communication with the Union and providing them with the proper notice and a chance to respond, I would limit any of your questions to just basic status. That way, the City's position with the Union can stay uncompromised, as far as future proceedings, without having their input so far. We are in the process of engaging with proper notice requirements, and communications are proceeding with them. Commissioner Burnett said he had a question while reading through the new RFP. There was an extra position created. I was wondering why. Acting City Manager Hernandez said we were looking at job descriptions and other areas that could have maintenance as an RFP. We changed that in the updated one, which no longer has that.

Commissioner Patillo asked if the manual for the standard operating procedures was now included. Acting City Manager Hernandez said it is not included in the RFP because it has not gone out, but it will be.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

5. Motion to Recess into Executive Closed Session pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(2) for the purpose of discussing limited personnel matters (hiring of the City Manager) and NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(7) for discussions subject to the attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the City is or may become a participant. (Roll Call Vote Required)

**Commissioner Burnett moved to Recess to Executive Closed Session at 6:59 PM.
Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.**

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

6. Motion to Reconvene into Open Session and read the statements related to the Executive Closed Session. (Roll Call Vote Required)

Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin moved to Reconvene to Open Session at 8:13 PM.
Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.

7. Action, if any, related to the Executive Closed Session. (Roll Call Vote Required)

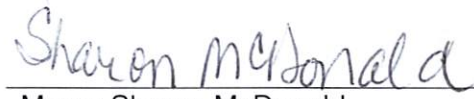
Mayor McDonald said the minutes should reflect that the only matters we discussed during the closed session was the pending litigation to accept the settlement proposed by Stephanie Hernandez, the Acting City Manager.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin moved to accept the settlement proposal presented by Dr. Stephanie Hernandez and to delegate authority to Lynn Isaacson to finalize the settlement agreement.

Commissioner Pattillo seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 4 - 3 - 0. Mayor Sharon McDonald, Commissioner Warren Robinson, Commissioner Mark Tapley voted nay.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro-Tem Rardin moved to adjourn at 8:17 PM.
Commissioner Hernandez seconded the motion.
Motion Passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 0.



Mayor Sharon McDonald

ATTEST:



City Clerk Rachel Hughes

(Prepared by Dylan Aleshire, Deputy Clerk)
Approved at the Regular Meeting held on May 12, 2026.

