

Town of Paonia
214 Grand Avenue
Monday, March 30, 2026 6:30 PM
Special Town Board Meeting Minutes

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Mayor Smith calls the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

A) Roll Call

Present:

Mayor Smith

Mayor Pro-Tem Stelter (via Zoom)

Trustee Czech

Trustee Heck

Trustee Hunter

Trustee Mejorado (via Zoom)

Trustee Tarnow

B) Approval of Agenda

Trustee Hunter makes a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Trustee Czech.

The motion carries unanimously.

C) Actions & Presentations

- 1) Trustee Approval of a Statement of Fact Clarifying Approved Budgets, Purchases and Purchasing Policy to be Distributed Publicly.

Public Comment:

- Unidentified speaker, unidentified residency, spoke against town surveillance cameras.
- S. Watson, in-town resident, spoke to lack of balanced review.
- L. Atul, unidentified residency, spoke to security camera storage.
- L. Short, in-town resident, spoke to board priorities, spending, and public trust.
- A. Foster, in-town resident, spoke to spending and better public engagement and communication.
- J. Park, out-of-town resident, spoke to STR public input.
- S. Pagano, in-town resident, spoke against usage of public funds for publishing a rebuttal.
- B. Hebrew, in-town resident, spoke against usage of public funds for publishing rebuttal.
- R. Byrge, out-of-town resident, spoke in support of cameras and board.
- S. Barley, out-of-town resident, spoke to surveillance vendors & surveillance risks.
- P. McCarthy, in-town resident, spoke to criticism of board & administration.
- S. Patterson, in-town resident, spoke against usage of public funds for publishing rebuttal.
- C. Patterson, out-of-town resident, spoke against usage of public funds for publishing rebuttal.
- J. Ackerman, in-town resident, spoke to better community dialogue, leadership and trust-building.
- S. Briscolar, out-of-town resident, spoke in support of the Town Administrator, false claims, and defamation risks.
- M. Brandt, in-town resident, spoke to free speech, spending on rebuttal, and communication methods.
- L. Thliveris, out-of-town resident, spoke to a balanced discussion rather than paid rebuttals.
- S. Yeamans, out-of-town resident, spoke to responsible use of grant funding and town finances.

The Board discussed responding to a public flyer containing alleged misinformation, agreeing that clarification was warranted but differing on approach. Concerns were

raised about using taxpayer funds for newspaper publication, with preference expressed for sharing information through town channels. Trustees emphasized keeping the statement factual and neutral, improving communication with the public, and avoiding escalation, while some suggested a more interactive or open forum instead of a one-way response.

Trustee Tarnow makes a motion to edit this letter to remove unnecessary characterizations and assertions, keep the facts and quickly get it out through the town's web page and similar outlets. Seconded by Trustee Hunter.

Voting Aye:

Trustee Meorado

Trustee Czech

Trustee Hunter

Trustee Heck

Trustee Tarnow

Voting Nay:

Mayor Pro-Tem Stelter

The motion carries.

Following the motion, the Board discussed whether the proposed edits to the letter needed to be completed during the same meeting. Concerns were raised that substantive changes might require full Board agreement in real time to comply with open meeting requirements. Town Attorney Buchner clarified that while specific wording did not need to be included in the motion, the Board must agree on the changes before adopting the final document, prompting the Board to proceed with live edits.

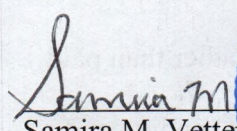
The Board agreed to revise the statement to remove accusatory and subjective language, replacing references to an "anonymous" or "libelous" posting with more neutral phrasing indicating that the Board believed the posting contained false or misleading information. Entire sections considered argumentative or unnecessary were deleted, and the overall tone was shifted to focus strictly on factual clarification rather than intent or opinion. The budget and finance sections were largely retained with minimal edits, while the tree section was expanded to note that many older trees are beyond their life expectancy and that the Town will work with a certified arborist on a replacement plan. The camera section was revised to remove implications of surveillance or facial recognition, clarifying instead that cameras are used to identify and address vandalism more quickly. The closing language was softened to acknowledge that the statement may not resolve all concerns, and general edits were made throughout to simplify wording, remove redundancy, and present a unified, fact-based response.

Trustee Hunter makes a motion to accept the changes as just discussed. Seconded by Trustee Heck.

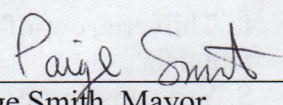
The motion carries unanimously.

D) Adjournment

Mayor Smith adjourns the meeting at 8:12 PM.


Samira M. Vetter, Town Clerk




Paige Smith, Mayor