



BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, April 02, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Palmer Lake Town Hall – 28 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake, Colorado

MINUTES

Call to Order / Roll Call

Meeting Called to order at 6:00PM

Present: Roger Moseley, John Marble, Dennis Stern, Tony Beltran, Michael Beeson

Absent: Beth Harris, Atis Jurka

Pledge of Allegiance

Business Items

1. Discussion/Review and Possible Approval of a Contract for Legal Services with JVAM Law

The Board discussed the proposed contract for legal services, during which concerns were raised regarding the procurement process and the withdrawal of previous applicants. Debate focused on whether prior communications between a Board member and a bidding firm were adequately disclosed, with some asserting that public disclosures had been made while administration maintained that a lack of transparency during the formal selection process remained a primary concern. Staff defended the integrity of the process and emphasized the urgent need to appoint legal counsel to ensure municipal stability, noting that the current firm remained a technically compliant option following the voluntary withdrawal of other candidates.

Public Comment

Jennifer Rausch – Argued that should statements in the RFP were improperly treated as mandatory requirements rather than scoring criteria. She contended that inconsistent disclosure expectations between firms created an unfair process and exposed the Town to legal risk, urging better collaboration between staff and the Board's professional expertise.

Daren Fike - Raised concerns regarding irregularities in the legal services procurement, questioning why a firm was dismissed despite meeting all mandatory RFP criteria. He suggested this could expose the town to legal liability and further alleged that a failure to amend the Board's agenda as directed contributed to the firm's withdrawal. He concluded by calling for greater accountability in administrative procedures and agenda management.

- Response from Town Staff was that due to Open Meeting Law's the agenda could not be modified within 24 hours of the scheduled meeting.

John Hartzog – Criticized the legal services procurement process, characterizing it as flawed due to ambiguous language in the RFP regarding communication restrictions. He noted that should versus shall distinctions are professionally binding and that a poorly drafted RFP inevitably leads to procedural issues. He further observed a fundamental dysfunction between the Board and staff, citing a lack of transparency and trust as systemic problems that the town must resolve to move forward effectively.

Reid Wiecks – Urged the Board to approve a legal services contract immediately, citing a significant backlog of municipal projects stalled by the lack of an attorney. He noted that lack of progress on multiple issues have led to stagnation. He emphasized that this delay risks losing financial support from donors and leaves bodies like the Board of Adjustment vulnerable to litigation. He concluded that the immediate appointment of legal counsel is necessary to prevent essential town improvements from piling up further.

John Vincent – Expressed concern regarding the lack of a contingency plan following the discharge of the previous town attorney. He emphasized that critical public safety initiatives, including fire and wildfire resiliency codes, are currently stalled pending legal review. They argued that operating without a safety net or a transition plan has left the department vulnerable and urged the Board to prioritize establishing consistent legal counsel to support emergency services and municipal safety documents.

Bill McDonald – Commented on the Board's relative lack of longevity and addressed the current absence of legal counsel. He attributed the town's situation to the decision not to retain interim legal services following the resignation of the previous attorney. He advised the Board to ensure a transition plan is in place for future personnel changes to maintain continuous legal coverage for the town.

Eric Sepp – Urged the Board to reach a decision on legal counsel to address a backlog of property and tax-related matters. He highlighted several time-sensitive projects, including a conservation easement tax credit for Lake View Estates, a potential land donation to the Town, and a property tax abatement pending with the El Paso County Treasurer's Office. He noted that the ongoing lack of legal coverage has delayed the re-subdivision and Planning Commission approvals, causing significant administrative and financial uncertainty. He concluded by thanking staff and the Board for their patience while emphasizing the need for an efficacious resolution to restore Town functions.

Josh Mabe – Expressed frustration over a multi-year land purchase negotiation that stalled at the closing stage due to the town's lack of legal counsel. The speaker noted that the delay has caused significant financial loss, forcing them to sign a new lease and reconsider doing business in the town. They urged the Board to appoint an attorney immediately to allow pending land deals and small business investments to move forward.

Christi Birkeland – Addressed the Board regarding the vacant town attorney position, noting that the list of pending legal issues has grown to impact every municipal department since the previous attorney's departure. She emphasized that the lack of counsel is making town operations increasingly difficult and urged the Board to secure either a permanent town attorney or a special project attorney as soon as possible to address these serious matters.

Trustee Beeson argued that both law firms involved in the procurement process confirmed that contact disclosure was advisory, not mandatory. Trustee Beeson contended that the March 25th memo incorrectly characterized disclosure as an explicit requirement, leading to the unequal treatment and subsequent withdrawal of a bidder. He further questioned why staff provided a legal opinion on the matter after previously stating they were not qualified to offer legal advice, suggesting this inconsistency violated RFP standards.

Motion to approve the contract with JVAM. (Stern, Beltran) Roll Call Vote.

Accept: Beltran, Stern,

Deny: Marble,

Abstain: Beeson, Moseley

Motion Passed.

Public Comment - *Public comments are encouraged to be emailed to the Town office at info@palmer-lake.org with subject line of Public Comment (24 hours prior to meeting) and shall be distributed and read at the meeting. Otherwise, please be recognized to speak, sign in, and address the Board on matters not on the agenda. Thank you!*

No Public Comments received.

Adjourn Meeting Adjourned at 7:06PM



Town Clerk- Erica N. Romero



Mayor Dennis Stern