

MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BISBEE, COUNTY OF COCHISE, AND STATE OF ARIZONA, HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026, AT 5:30 PM IN THE CITY OF BISBEE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 118 ARIZONA STREET, BISBEE, ARIZONA.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR BUDGE AT 5:31PM.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL

Councilmember Karen Schumacher, Ward I

Councilmember Pete Skinner, Ward II Excused

Councilmember Trish Damon, Ward III

Mayor Ken Budge

Councilmember Anna Cline, Ward III, Mayor Pro Tempore 5:33PM

Councilmember Mel Sowid, Ward II

Councilmember Lori Reynolds, Ward I

STAFF

Ashlee Coronado, Interim City Manager / City Clerk

CITY ATTORNEY

Joseph Estes

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AND/OR CONSIDERED AT THESE MEETINGS:

1. Discussion and Possible Action related to the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) RFP respondents.

Ken Budge, Mayor

Mayor Budge called the meeting to order and explained that they would be going into executive session due to legal issues that had arisen since the RFP was put out. He noted that their attorney needed to discuss these matters with the council before proceeding.

MOTION: Mayor Budge moved to go into executive session.

SECOND: Councilmember Sowid MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION: Mayor Budge moved to come out of executive session.

SECOND: Councilmember Cline MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

After executive session, Mayor Budge announced the Council would proceed with discussions and identified the top candidates: Hapi (1st, 376), Verdant (2nd, 327), and Destination IQ and Bisbee Forward (tied for 3rd, 304).

Hapi:

Council discussed the \$48,000 annual (\$4,000/month) all-inclusive retainer for marketing, social media, and strategy. Hapi confirmed no hidden fees and flexibility to fit the city's budget. Council members praised their full-service approach, cost, and focus on understanding Bisbee.

Verdant:

Recognized for creative ideas, community engagement, and sustainability focus. Concerns were raised about cost—estimated at over \$130,000 annually plus additional expenses—which could limit funds for advertising. Verdant noted their scope and hours are adjustable.

Destination IQ:

Council cited high projected costs (around \$250,000 total) and à la carte pricing as concerns. The firm emphasized flexibility and experience with rural destinations, including stakeholder engagement and tourism strategy development.

Bisbee Forward:

Procedural concerns arose after additional information was sent to councilmembers outside the formal process. The contact was deemed inappropriate. The group emphasized its nonprofit, local approach, and community insight, though Council noted concerns about experience and structure.

Conclusion:

Council debated fairness and process concerns but agreed to move forward rather than delay further.

MOTION: Mayor Budge moved forward with HAPI and instruct the City Manager and City Attorney to negotiate a contract with them and bring it back to Council for discussion.

SECOND: Councilmember Damon

Councilmember Schumacher requested that, upon return of the contract, the agenda include discussion regarding how the organizational structure would function with the City serving as the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO).

Mayor Budge stated he would be amenable to establishing a board or commission, should the Council desire, noting that such action would require approval of all seven Councilmembers.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Councilmember Schumacher, Damon, Reynolds, Sowid, Cline and Mayor Budge

NAYS:0

MOTION PASSED: AYES-6 NAYS-0

Mayor Budge stated that, as there was nothing else before this Council this meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:59PM

Ken Budge, Mayor