



**CITY OF TUCSON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
PAUL KEMNITZ
APPEAL OF TERMINATION HEARING MINUTES
JANUARY 26 - 28, 2026**

January 26, 2026 - Day One

A quorum of the Civil Service Commission of the City of Tucson met at 9:03 AM on Monday, January 26, 2025, at City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St. in Tucson, Arizona, for the Appeal of Termination filed by Paul Kemnitz from the Parks and Recreation Department. The hearing was made available remotely through technological means as permitted under Arizona law as well as in person.

9:03 AM – The hearing was called to order and roll call was taken.

Those present from the Civil Service Commission were Chairperson Paul Fimbres, Commission Members Michael (Mick) Mathieu (who participated remotely) and Paula Wilk. Also present were Donna Aversa, Legal Counsel to the CSC, Dr. Teri Traaen, Human Resource Director, CSC Secretary, and Robert Stevenson, Staff Assistant for Human Resources, CSC Recording Secretary.

Also present were Chief Deputy City Attorney Jennifer Stash, representing the City and the Parks and Recreation Department, Lara Hamwey, Director of Parks and Recreation; Margot Veranes, Attorney, representing Appellant Paul Kemnitz, who was also present.

Chairperson Fimbres read the Opening Statement. The Chairperson asked if there were any preliminary matters to discuss.

9:11 AM – The Appellant's attorney raised objection to three pages of the City's exhibits. Chairperson Fimbres said this could be addressed after the exhibits are submitted to the record.

9:12 AM – Commissioner Mathieu requested the Teams feed spotlight the chambers. The feed was updated by Mr. Stevenson.

9:13 AM – The City's attorney explained how the City Clerk's staff will help make sure witnesses are seen on camera from the chambers by Commissioner Mattieu.

9:14 AM - The rule was invoked. Invoking the rule is a civil procedure which allows a party to request a witness, or witnesses, be prevented from hearing testimony of other witnesses during the hearing.

The following witnesses were directed to wait outside the chambers by Chairperson Fimbres until called to the stand. They will be sworn in as they appear.

The City's Witnesses:

1. John Mancine, Supervisor, Parks & Recreation
2. John Bonillas, Administrator, Parks & Recreation
3. Erin Gallego, Manager, Human Resources



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4. Greg Jackson, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation
5. Dr. Teri Traaen, Director, Human Resources Department
The parties stipulated Dr. Traaen could stay in order to execute her role as Secretary to the CSC to read into the record the submission of all exhibits. She will be dismissed from the chambers before opening statements are given. The City noted it objected to Dr. Traaen being removed from the chamber during testimony since she is Secretary to the CSC, however, it agreed with Dr. Traaen leaving the chambers.
6. Lara Hamwey, Director, Parks & Recreation
Ms. Hamwey was allowed to stay as she is representing the City in her role as Director of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Appellant's Witnesses:

1. Marcos Romero
2. James Kuchar
3. James Martinez
4. Appellant

9:16 AM - Exhibits read into the record by CSC Secretary, Dr. Teri Traaen.

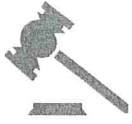
By Respondent City of Tucson

Exhibit A - Tabs 1 through 6

1. City's Memorandum- Imposed Leave with Pay (COT001)
2. Notice of Intent to Discharge (COT002- COT003)
3. Exhibit A (COT004- COT005)
4. Notice of Decision (Appealable Action) (COT006)
5. Employee's Right to Civil Service Appeal (COT007)
6. Paul Kemnitz Appeal Letter (COT008- COT010)

Exhibit B - Tabs 1 through 12

1. Parks and Recreation Department Personnel File (COT011- COT050)
2. Human Resources Personnel File (COT051- COT072)
3. Miscellaneous Emails and Notes (COT073- COT092)
4. Human Resources Investigation Information File (COT093- COT168)
5. Parks and Recreation Department Director File (COT169- COT212)
6. Parks and Recreation Department Deputy Director Emails and Notes (COT213- COT226)
7. Human Resources Manager Emails (COT227- COT233)
8. Paul Kemnitz's Request to Address the Mayor and Council- (COT234- COT236)
9. Definition of Just Cause, Tucson City Code § 10-3 (COT237)
10. Administrative Directive 2.02-5, Rules of Conduct (COT238- COT241)



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11. Code of Ethics (COT242- COT260)
12. Admitted into record on a flash drive, Paul Kemnitz addressing Mayor and Council at the 06/17/2025 meeting. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NISPb5-vQVU> (7:53:14- 7:56:24)

By Petitioner Paul Kemnitz

1. City of Tucson Job Description J3062 – Groundskeeper (05.2025) (AFSCME_0021-0022)
2. Acknowledgment dated 10.05.2023 (AFSCME_0041)
3. City of Tucson / AFSCME MoU Excerpts (AFSCME_0016-0019)
4. Facebook Photo of Wedding Party (AFSCME_0062)
5. Hamway LinkedIn profile (AFSCME_0057-0061)
6. City of Tucson News Release November 23, 2020 re: Hamwey hiring (AFSCME_0023-0026)

Binders of City and Appellant's exhibits were distributed to all parties. For the record, it was noted that Commissioner Mathieu had copies of the binders at his location.

9:18 AM - Ms. Veranes objected to three pages of the City's Exhibit B, Tab 4, pages 105, 106, and 204. She stated these items are from after the City decided to terminate Mr. Kemnitz and thus, are not relevant. Ms. Stash refuted the objection with the following: the pages are from between when the process Notice of Intent (NOI) was served and the Notice of Decision (NOD) was served. The termination is not final until the NOD is served. She also mentioned case law and the Civil Service Rules to make sure the City is following its rules and procedures. Ms. Stash argued these are notes recapping what happened during meetings with Mr. Kemnitz. She also mentioned there are no technical rules of evidence in a Civil Service hearing. Items which are deemed irrelevant, incompetent, immaterial, or unduly repetitive may be excluded.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions of both attorneys.

Chairperson Fimbres denied the Appellant's objection and ruled the evidence will be allowed.

9:37 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Dr. Traaen to leave the chamber as the rule was invoked and she will be testifying later.

9:39 AM – City's Opening Statement

9:45 AM – Appellant's Opening Statement

The City called its first witness, John Mancine, Supervisor, Parks and Recreation Department.

9:54 AM – Mr. Mancine was sworn in and gave testimony.



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10:15 AM – Mr. Mancine gave testimony on cross-examination.

10:21 AM – There was no redirect of Mr. Mancine. The Commission asked clarifying questions.

10:24 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Mancine to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

10:25 AM – 10:25 AM – Break

The City called its second witness, John Bonillas, Administrator, Parks and Recreation Department.

10:34 AM – Mr. Bonillas was sworn in and gave testimony.

10:50 AM – Mr. Bonillas gave testimony on cross-examination.

10:57 AM – Mr. Bonillas gave testimony on redirect. The Commission asked clarifying questions.

11:02 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Mancine to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

The City called its third witness, Erin Gallego, Manager, Human Resources Department.

11:04 AM – Ms. Gallego was sworn in and gave testimony.

11:28 AM – Ms. Gallego gave testimony on cross-examination.

11:47 AM – Ms. Gallego gave testimony on redirect. The Commission asked clarifying questions.

12:01 PM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Ms. Gallego to not speak about her testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

12:02 PM – Lunch Break

The City called its fourth witness, Greg Jackson, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department

1:02 PM – Mr. Jackson was sworn in.

1:03 PM – Ms. Veranes raised a concern about Mr. Jackson's use of notes which don't appear to be in the exhibits. She requested they be excluded if they aren't submitted as evidence. Ms. Stash objected to entering them into the record citing previous experience in court settings where witnesses can refer to notes as long as they're available to be seen by opposing counsel.



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Chairperson Fimbres asked clarifying questions. Parties agreed Mr. Jackson would not refer to the notes during testimony. If he needed them, they would be admitted.

1:18 PM – Mr. Jackson gave testimony.

1:56 PM – Mr. Jackson gave testimony on cross-examination.

2:07 PM – There was no redirect of Mr. Jackson. The Commission asked clarifying questions.

2:13 PM – Chairperson Fimbres asked if any parties would like a copy of Mr. Jackson's notes. Ms. Veranes did request they be part of the record.

The notes were submitted by the City as: Exhibit C, Item 1 and titled "Greg Jackson's Hearing Notes." Also submitted by the City, Exhibit C, Item 2 and titled "Erin Gallego's Hearing Notes."

2:15 PM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Jackson to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

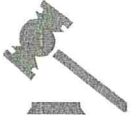
Chairperson Fimbres asked the parties about expected length of the testimony and if they had a hard exit time for later in the afternoon. Ms. Veranes shared that Mr. Kemnitz would need to arrange for someone to pick up his daughter if the hearing went beyond 4:30 PM.

2:15 PM – 2:24 PM – Break

The City called its fifth witness, Dr. Teri Traaen, Director, Human Resources Department.

2:25 PM – Dr. Traaen was sworn in and gave testimony. Video was played, Exhibit B, Item 12, of the Appellant speaking at the 06/17/2025 Mayor and Council Meeting.

3:09 PM – Ms. Veranes wanted an objection on the record that the Commission cannot consider conduct that occurred after the Exhibit A, in evidence as Exhibit A, Tab 3, had been developed in determining whether the City had just cause to decide to terminate Mr. Kemnitz. Ms. Stash disagreed, stating the Commission can weigh the evidence as presented. That this is part of the termination process and it's important for the Commission to hear the process. Ms. Veranes had a rebuttal stating the Commission should only consider what happened and not new conduct to justify why the City is disciplining someone and that the central question is, "Did the City have just cause to discipline Mr. Kemnitz?" Ms. Stash responded, stating the process continues after the employee's opportunity to respond. It has been the practice that the Commission hears the entire process through the Notice of Decision. Also, Ms. Stash added, it is not unusual to hear about proceeding events as they're part of the entire process and part of the appeal. And there are no rules that say the Commission can't hear this evidence.



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Commissioner Mathieu asked a clarifying question about the timeline. The City explained the Notice of Intent (NOI) was done on June 18, 2026, the Notice to Respond on June 25, 2026, and the Notice of Decision on the following day, June 26, 2026.

The City asked the Commission to continue moving forward with its planned testimony and note the Appellant's objection and that if the Commission deems what the City presents as irrelevant to its case it will not consider it in its final decision. Ms. Stash also stated the Appellant could make arguments in closing statements to ask the Commission to not consider evidence they consider irrelevant. Ms. Veranes said it would be hard for the Commission to disregard evidence once it's presented.

Chairperson Fimbres ruled he would allow the evidence to be presented and note the objection of the Appellant and that the Commission will weigh the evidence accordingly.

3:27 PM – Dr. Traaen resumed testimony.

3:33 PM – Dr. Traaen gave testimony on cross-examination.

4:31 PM – Dr. Traaen gave testimony on redirect. The Commission asked clarifying questions.

4:37 PM – The City asked the Chairperson if Dr. Traaen could remain in chambers in her role as Secretary for the CSC now that her testimony is complete. The Appellant's attorney agreed. Chairperson Fimbres ruled Dr. Traaen can be present for the rest of the hearing. Dr. Traaen was excused from the stand.

4:39 PM – The hearing adjourned for the day to reconvene at 9:00 AM, Tuesday, January 27, 2026, for day two.

January 27, 2026 – Day Two

A quorum of the Civil Service Commission of the City of Tucson met and was called to order at 9:11 AM on Tuesday, January 27, 2025, at City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St. in Tucson, Arizona, for the Appeal of Termination filed by Paul Kemnitz from the Parks and Recreation Department. The hearing was made available remotely through technological means as permitted under Arizona law as well as in person.

Those present from the Civil Service Commission were Chairperson Paul Fimbres, Commission Members Michael (Mick) Mathieu (who participated remotely) and Paula Wilk. Also present were Donna Aversa, Legal Counsel to the CSC, Dr. Teri Traaen, Human Resource Director, CSC Secretary, and Robert Stevenson, Staff Assistant for Human Resources, CSC Recording Secretary.



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Also present were Chief Deputy City Attorney Jennifer Stash, representing the City and the Parks and Recreation Department, Lara Hamwey, Director of Parks and Recreation; Margot Veranes, Attorney, representing Appellant Paul Kemnitz, who was also present.

9:12 AM – The Chairperson called upon the attorneys representing each side to discuss a change in the order of appearance of witnesses in the hearing. Both sides agreed to hear from the Appellant’s first three witnesses in order to lessen the impact on those three individuals’ work schedule.

The rule was invoked. Invoking the rule is a civil procedure which allows a party to request a witness, or witnesses, be prevented from hearing testimony of other witnesses during the hearing.

Witnesses were directed to wait outside the chambers until they are called to the stand.

The Appellant called their first witness, Marcos Romero, Groundskeeper, Parks and Recreation Department.

9:14 AM – Mr. Romero was sworn in and gave testimony.

9:19 AM – Mr. Romero gave testimony on cross-examination.

9:21 AM – Mr. Romero gave testimony on redirect.

9:22 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Romero to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

The Appellant called their second witness, James Kuchar, Groundskeeper, Parks and Recreation Department.

9:23 AM – Mr. Kuchar was sworn in and gave testimony.

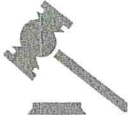
9:28 AM – Mr. Kuchar gave testimony on cross-examination.

9:28 AM – Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

9:29 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Kuchar to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

The Appellant called their third witness, James Martinez, Groundskeeper, Parks and Recreation Department.

9:30 AM – Mr. Martinez was sworn in and gave testimony.



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9:34 AM – Mr. Martinez gave testimony on cross-examination.

9:36 AM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Martinez to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused to return to work.

The City called its sixth witness, Lara Hamwey, Director, Parks and Recreation Department.

9:38 AM – Ms. Hamwey was sworn in and gave testimony.

10:25 AM – Break

10:35 AM – Ms. Hamwey resumed testimony.

11:35 PM – Lunch Break

12:48 PM – Ms. Hamwey gave testimony on cross-examination.

1:22 PM – Commissioner Mathieu brought a point of order about a photo from Facebook referenced during cross-examination. Mr. Mathieu recounted Mr. Bonillas's testimony from the day before about the photo, which Mr. Bonillas said he did not know where the photo came from and it was not on his Facebook page. Ms. Stash clarified that Mr. Bonillas indicated it was a private photo and not readily available publicly. Commissioner Mathieu wanted the photo entered into evidence and hoped future testimony could clarify how the photo was obtained by the Appellant. Ms. Veranes suggested entering the photo into evidence after the City rests its case and before the Appellant begins his testimony. Commissioner Wilk also asked about the Appellant's exhibit labeled Facebook Photo of Wedding Party (AFSCME_0062). Commissioner Mathieu expressed interest in getting more answers as the testimony continues.

1:28 PM – Ms. Hamwey resumed testimony on cross-examination.

1:34 PM – Ms. Veranes requested a break to consult with the Appellant.

1:44 PM – Ms. Hamwey resumed testimony on cross-examination.

1:49 PM – Ms. Hamwey gave testimony on redirect. Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

2:18 PM – Chairperson Fimbres instructed Mr. Kuchar to not speak about his testimony with anyone outside of the chambers and was excused from the witness stand.

2:19 PM – The City rested their case.

The Appellant called their fourth witness, Paul Kemnitz, Petitioner.



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2:19 PM – Mr. Kemnitz was sworn in. Ms. Veranes then asked how the Commission, and the City’s attorney, would like to proceed with entering a new photo into the record. Ms. Stash requested the Appellant lay the foundation before making the request for it to be admitted during Mr. Kemnitz’s testimony. There was discussion on how to distribute the photo to those present in person and remotely. A break was requested to send the file to Mr. Mathieu.

2:21 PM – Break

2:27 PM – Mr. Kemnitz gave testimony.

2:52 PM – Ms. Veranes moved to admit a photo as Petitioner’s Exhibit Number 7. Ms. Stash requested to ask more foundational questions before the Chair makes a ruling. Ms. Veranes agreed. The Chairperson approved the admission of Mr. Kemnitz’s photo of a Facebook post shown on another employee’s phone as Petitioner’s Exhibit Number 7.

2:54 PM – Mr. Kemnitz resumed testimony.

3:23 PM – Mr. Kemnitz gave testimony on cross-examination.

3:34 PM – Ms. Veranes requested a break to consult with Mr. Kemnitz.

3:44 PM – Mr. Kemnitz resumed testimony under cross-examination.

3:59 PM – The Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

4:19 PM - Break

4:26 PM – The Commissioners resumed asking clarifying questions.

The Appellant rested their case.

4:31 PM – The hearing adjourned for the day to reconvene at 9:00 AM, Wednesday, January 28, 2026, for day three.

January 27, 2026 – Day Three

A quorum of the Civil Service Commission of the City of Tucson met and was called to order at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, January 28, 2025, at City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St. in Tucson, Arizona, for the Appeal of Termination filed by Paul Kemnitz from the Parks and Recreation Department. The hearing was made available remotely through technological means as permitted under Arizona law as well as in person.



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Those present from the Civil Service Commission were Chairperson Paul Fimbres, Commission Members Michael (Mick) Mathieu (who participated remotely) and Paula Wilk. Also present were Donna Aversa, Legal Counsel to the CSC, Dr. Teri Traaen, Human Resource Director, CSC Secretary, and Robert Stevenson, Staff Assistant for Human Resources, CSC Recording Secretary.

Also present were Chief Deputy City Attorney Jennifer Stash, representing the City and the Parks and Recreation Department, Lara Hamwey, Director of Parks and Recreation; Margot Veranes, Attorney, representing Appellant Paul Kemnitz, who was also present.

9:01 AM - The City and Appellant stated neither would be calling rebuttal witnesses.

9:02 AM - The City made its closing statement.

9:05 AM - The Appellant made their closing statement.

9:13 AM - The City made a rebuttal statement.

9:22 AM - Chairperson Fimbres made a motion for the panel to move into executive session for deliberations. Commissioner Wilk duly seconded. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

10:46 AM - The Commission ended executive session and resumed the public meeting of the panel. Chairperson Fimbres stated the executive session is confidential according to Arizona statute. All three members of the panel read statements about their findings.

11:01 AM - Chairperson Fimbres moved to deny Appellant Paul Kemnitz's appeal and affirm the disciplinary action for the reason that there was just cause for the discipline imposed by the City. Commissioner Wilk duly seconded. The motion passed 3-0 on a voice vote.

Mr. Kemnitz made a statement to the panel.

The Chairperson directed the attorney for the Commission to work with the Chairperson to finalize the Commission's written decision.

The chairman adjourned the hearing at 11:04 A.M.


Paul Fimbres, Chairperson
Civil Service Commission

APRIL 15, 2026
Date