

WALLSBURG TOWN COUNCIL

Truth In Taxation Public Hearing - Fiscal Year 2024

August 17, 2023 - 7 pm

1. Call to Order 7:01pm

- a. Pledge Of Allegiance - Completed
- b. Prayer – Scott Larsen
- c. Roll Call – Scott Larsen, Justin Carlile, Celeni Richins, Terri Eisel, Clint Allen, Alisha O’Driscoll

-Passed roll around, some signed and some did not. Here are the ones that signed in and ones that were noted that didn’t sign in. This list is partial and may not reflect all participants. Darell and Chris Bigelow, Blaine and CaraLee Boren, Doyle and Darla Gardner, Christian Neilson, Kim Hicken, Doylene Graham, Yvonne Thompson, JoAnn Batty, Mavis Hortin, Camille Sabey, Brett Baum, Lynda Thompson, Dennis and LuWanna Phillips, Karma Ford, Lorin Smart, Janet Smart, Brandon Richins, Aubri Buehler, Coleen Nielsen, Peter Nielsen, Brenda Richins, Amanda Carlile, Lillian Thompson, Troy Thompson, Nedra Shepherd, Kody Potter, Trevor Pulham, Ronnie Bishop, MarDee Brown, Leslie Smith, Lucille O’Driscoll, Devan Clyde, Courtney Clyde, Ken Adams, Greg Allen, Sam Hicken, Erin Hicken, Jamie Neilson, Ramona Memmott, Mary Piscitelli, Bob Piscitelli, Robbi Bigelow, Brylee Bigelow, Ben and Syndi Fitzgerald, Mick Bigelow, Mark Allen, Kent Payne, Tammy and Doyle Graham, Stoney Mecham, Georgia and Boyd Whiting, Steve and JoAnn Muir, Callie and JR Trotter, KC And Lindsey Jepperson, Keather and Zach Hicken, KPCW Reporter, John Keller, Sam Hendricksen, Wasatch County Police Officer.

2. Wallsburg Town Council Information Presentation – Information and Discussion Only

- a. The Wallsburg Town Council will present information to the public regarding the proposed property tax rate increase.

-Wallsburg Town Council presented a video explaining how property taxes and determined that answered a few simple questions of how all that works. -Wallsburg Town Council went over the public handouts on a powerpoint slideshow. The handouts were available in person and will continue to be available on the public notice website. Highlights of the presentation included what specific items on the budget are being proposed to increase that will result in the higher projected expenditures/revenue and the need to raise property taxes. It was also noted that grant funds received are labeled as revenue, but are a one time thing for this year and will not be included in next years revenue unless more grants are applied for and awarded to the Town.

3. Public Comment

- a. This is the public’s opportunity to ask questions and comment on the proposed property tax rate increase for Wallsburg Town. Please come up to the table, state your name and address before making a comment, and speak loudly to assure comments are recorded properly. Please keep comments brief and on topic, please do not repeat previous comments.

-Ramona Memmott: Comment: regarding that last year was the highest cost for heating and snow removal. Were those same numbers used this year or were lower numbers used knowing that last year was an unusual year? Response: the street maintenance budget is not being proposed to increase this year. Comment: my taxes and home valued doubled last year, now with this increase it’s too much especially for those on fixed incomes and families trying to provide. I think you all needed a raise but I just think they were higher than the budget could cover. Response: The funds for the raises were reallocated from other parts of the budget. Comment: I just think it’s too much money for one year. Response: Thank You.

-Aubri Buehler: Comment: I get how it all works, you need to get money for infrastructure and to maintain the Town but you are getting it from 102 homes. You can’t squeeze blood out of a turnip. You manage 400 acres, a 141% increase in wages is not needed for that. You didn’t take these positions to make money, I know many people that took this job just to pay their water bill. Who in their right mind would annex into the Town except a developer? You have given yourselves enough raise to cover your increase, where’s ours?

-Boyd Whiting: Comment: Is this tax rate increase a done deal or is there room for discussion? Response: it is not a done deal, this is the public hearing for it.

- Erin Hicken: Comment: Curious why a year ago there was an opportunity for \$25,000 in revenue to the Town without a tax burden was shot down. Have you thought of those kinds of things again? I think there's still interest and room in gaining revenue in other ways.
- Celeni Richins (Mayor) – Many questions will be addressed after the public comment portion of the hearing, we are taking notes
- Mary Piscitelli: Comment: Increasing the cemetery budget to open the new section and wanting to buy rebar and supplies, can some of those items be purchased over multiple years? Somehow some way we have got to lower this amount. I don't know what those line items are but even if we can lower it 20% or 50%. You have 100 people bearing the burden and it's tough. I also noticed that some of the wages have increased but in my case my meter has had a zero reading twice in the last three months. I was at the last meeting and was told they didn't have time to read my meter. If we are increasing the wages we need to get value for those wages.
- Lorin Smart: Comment: I would like to see by the show of hands everyone here that has served on the Town Board. Some raised hands. I think if we look back a lot of it was done because they want to contribute to the community. Thank You.
- Sam Hicken: Comment: a year ago there was an opportunity for \$25,000 in revenue to be had that was passed up, and now the proposed cost for this building has now doubled. That opportunity was without a tax burden to the people. You guys represent the voice of the people, we are not here to be told what's going to happen. Also during covid were full wages being drawn? Because there probably wasn't full time being put in.
- Callie Trotter: Comment: I'm trying to think of solutions to reduce the tax increase myself. Working for the county building department, impact fee to build a single family dwelling in Wasatch County is approximately \$3000. To build in Wallsburg Town is \$279. Let's up the impact fees for these subdivisions coming in and try to increase revenue that way.
- Ramona Memmott: Comment: I do want to say that you need a raise, maybe it was a little more than funds were available at the time but I do think you work hard and do need a raise.
- Heather Hicken: Comment: I agree how hard you all work to make the place we live better. I am new to the Town, I appreciate all of the volunteer hours that go in. I feel like there could be other options for bringing in revenue. I also wanted to know where the Town legal fees are being paid from, is that from our property taxes? It's hard to pay taxes if they are using those funds to fight against us.
- John Keller: Comment: I am newer here in Wallsburg, I would be curious to know what the referred to revenue projects that were passed up. Response: There's only been one. Comment: How other alternatives can be brought before the council and the voting procedures on those would be helpful to know. Thank You.
- Brandon Richins: Comment: I don't see the wages of these people are the problem. They could be zero and it would barely affect this number. If anyone in this room wants to live the plush lifestyle of a \$300 Wallsburg council member just step up. But nobody will, will somebody please run for mayor. That's not the problem, in 2023 \$300 is nothing, it's volunteer service.
- Trevor Pulham: Comment: I'll second what Brandon Richins said, there is an election coming up and all three open positions are running unopposed. People also aren't volunteering for the planning commission. To answer one question about raising the impact fees, the planning commission has recommended to the town to update those. My other question is there is a reason why there is such a big jump? I do understand all of the factors, but I do think it is a rather large jump to what we are receiving, even though I do understand that things do go up.
- Mark Allen: Comment: From Utah County. I appreciate your service. I love that in Wallsburg you can come and talk. I encourage us to hold a brainstorming session so we can figure out ways to protect our valley. I am collecting signatures for the state flag if anyone wants to catch me while I'm here. Thank you for your service. Nobody wants to help and everybody has to complain. If we all grabbed a shovel and pitched in we could do some things. We're all in the boat together. I think a brainstorming suggestion is what I would suggest. I'm not from the government and I'm here to help.
- Ronnie Bishop: Comment: This may have been covered in the slides, but I am curious what the change in income is solely based in the property valuations, that should have increased the revenue off the bat. Want to make sure that is considered in how much of an increase is determined. Response: We give the revenue dollar amount to the county and they assign our rate. Even though valuations went up and revenue should go up, the tax rate goes up because the Town needs additional revenue. When the value goes up, the amount we receive is the same.
- Aubri Buehler: Comment: we're talking about a Town with 154 parcels and 400 acres. You're pulling from people that don't have it. If you could get people to annex it would take the burden off of us but they're not going to do it now, unless they are

developing and that totally blows up that small quaint awesome town that Wallsburg is. As far as wages, it is 39% of the \$60,000. That's tiny bits of money, but you're talking about this big of a town that you're managing. You signed up for this, no one else wants to do it. You all put your names in again. Response: I can pull my name tomorrow. Comment: Then do it. What do I get from Wallsburg? Response: Parks, Town Hall Comment: That I have to pay rent for. Response: We can get rid of the Town and you can go over to Heber. You get a cemetery, you have a water system. Comment: Water is separate, I can live where Alisha lives and still get water services. Response: You get a governing board. There are things the town needs; the roads, the town hall that needs renovations, so without changing something we can't fix things and keep having problems. Comment: You have the opportunity for an additional \$14,000 or \$15,000 and instead of doing something with it, you guys didn't sign up to make money, that could have went to the budget. Response: Hopefully that is incentive for other people to run. Comment: It didn't work. You've been paying yourselves since January. Response: How do you want to get people to run? What do you want to do when no one runs in two years? Comment: You have to understand what I'm saying, you're trying to get this money from 102 homes. Wouldn't it be nice if we could draw from this whole valley, but we cant. We are inviting developers. That's it.

-Ken Adams: Comment: A lot of this stuff is necessary, fixing the roads, etc. Part of the issue is fixed incomes and that does make a difference for them. On top of county raising taxes, the Town increase. There are ways to create opportunities for communal food, food drives, opportunities to bring in different kinds of donations to those on fixed incomes. The potato patch, there are ways to work together and help each other and looking at other ways to create funds would be helpful.

-Leslie Smith: Comment: I had a question on the \$30,000 grant for the internet, is there a 7% match for that too? Response: No, it's 100% grant. Comment: I was just curious, that is for the entire valley, right? Comment: Also you said that we get a park and we get a town hall and we get cemetery we get everything. The entire valley gets that, but just our Town pays for it. I paid \$50 in May to rent the park, I had to spend almost a full hour cleaning it to use it wiping tables, etc. I will clean when I leave, but I shouldn't have to pay to clean it before I use it.

-Tammy Graham: Comment: I feel like you guys feel like you're being attacked because you volunteer and you get paid. This room is full of volunteers. People that volunteer on the planning commission that don't get paid. 24th of July, etc. They just step up and do stuff all the time without being compensated. I do agree that taxes do need to be raised, but this is too high. We've got to figure out how to bring it down to at least half. I know that taxes haven't been raised for a while but this is too much of a jump all at once.

-Kent Payne: Comment: The first question I have is are you guys working for us or against us? It doesn't look like you are working for us. There are a lot of issues here. If we've got issues with roads and buildings what are we doing putting a water tank in? We don't need it, theres nothing wrong with the one we have other than we can develop now. I feel bad for the older people that have lived here their whole lives and are on fixed incomes. How are they going to pay for this? Do you guys have any ideas on what you can do to help them? They don't have the money to meet this. I think we can start and build a little bit at a time rather than all at once. We're already paying for a water tank for 40 years. I've been there done that for 8 years, I made \$30 a month. That didn't do a dang thing for me. Theres people in Woodruff, my brother in law is the mayor. They have 500 people that live there and 3 times the land we do. The mayor and town council don't draw a dime. I just think that we are barking up the wrong tree and inviting developers. The people here don't want it. Lets see if we can use the money to get some law enforcement over here to get people to slow down a little bit. If we're going to act like this then lets do it right. I also have a question about when Rose Mecham was clerk, we gave her a raise and we did it openly in the Town Board meeting and we didn't go in the back room and pat each other on the back and give each other a raise. Its time people stand up to you guys. People just want to live here, you're going to turn this into Park City. They cant afford the taxes.

-Celeni Richins (Mayor) We are going to close the public portion of the meeting and go through these questions and end the meeting with some of our comments-

4. Wallsburg Town Council Comments, Further Discussion – Information and Discussion Only

- a. This is the Town Council's opportunity to provide any additional information they deem necessary and to make closing remarks.

-Celeni Richins: We had several people talk about council and clerk wages. Council wages, part of the reason they were raised was to incentivize the positions in hopes people might run. We don't want to go into an election year running unopposed. When nobody put their name in the running, that was really hard. There are several of us that don't want to run again. As for the clerks rate, it was raised and discussed in a public meeting. These public meetings are scheduled the first Thursday of every month. We don't usually have more than 2 or 3 people here, we would love to have this many people here every time to discuss issues and things going on. It's always on the agenda what is going to be discussed. There are some things that have to be discussed in closed session per Utah State code. Personnel is one of those. We did discuss some of those things in closed session, and then we adopted them in public meeting and there is always a public comment period with every meeting. We welcome you to come discuss those items when we are having those meetings. We take comment all the time.

-Celeni Richins: As for revenue projects, the only revenue project that was discussed. Round Valley Learning Academy approached us asking if they can use this portion of the building as a school. That was turned down for many reasons, there are recordings if you'd like to listen to those recordings or read through those minutes. That was the only one that was discussed and turned down.

-Justin Carlile: As far as impact fees. To the best of my knowledge, if we were to collect more impact fees those can only be used for new construction projects. We are trying to maintain our existing infrastructure, those funds have to be used in 7 years and on new infrastructure. We aren't putting in any new infrastructure that that could go towards. (Unknown

Commenter): It can't be used for Roads? I think you can use it for roads. Celeni Richins: It depends on what it was collected for. If it was collected for something specific, it has to be used very specifically and lots of red tape that goes with that.

(Unknown Commenter): Right, and I think roads goes with that. Justin Carlile: Yes, for NEW roads construction. (Unknown

Commenter): I think it's for Main Canyon Road because its used to get into the area. It can also go to water. Celeni Richins: Water is very specific as well, that all goes to its own budget. (Unknown commenter): It is, but I think it can go towards that

because you're providing more water and it costs to get those pipes go in. I know its specific. Lets check on that where they can actually be used. Celeni Richins: We have asked many times. When we were updating the general plan we worked with a

planner to see how we can make that money work for us and there isn't a way. (Unknown Commenter): That's not a reason to not ask where they can be used. Justin Carlile: If we collect that money and it's not used appropriately in 7 years we forfeit it. Impact fees have to be used on specific purposes.

-Kent Payne: Lets get a new air condition in the town hall. -Clint Allen: that's the reason the Town needs more money is to do a lot of improvements. We're raising your taxes to fix the road that are falling apart, we can't afford to shoulder them or chip seal them. It costs \$100 grand to fix a block of road. Our budget is \$15,000 for the year. -Aubri Buehler: Doesn't the Town get money from the state for that? -Scott Larsen: We get maybe \$15,000 a year, and that's barely enough to cover the cost of the snow removal. Most of the time the Class C road funds go to snow plowing and sign replacements. -Clint Allen: The money we're trying to collect is to maintain the Town Hall and different things in the Town. Right now we barely have enough money to stay afloat, we want to get ahead and make repairs. The only increase we have had for the roads is a grant, we need to find a way to get revenue to make improvements in the falling apart town we live in.

-Kent Payne: What about the water tank? -Clint Allen: The water system is a completely different budget, zero funds from property taxes go towards the water system and no part of those funds go anywhere else.

-Justin Carlile: As far as other revenue sources, we talked about part of the 24th auction funds this year going towards the bathrooms at the park and we were shut down that there were people talking that if the money was going to the Town they wouldn't participate in the auction. So we did look at other revenue options and were shut down.

-Aubri Buehler: Clint gets extra wages because he is doing the water. Are his wages drawn from the water budget or the general budget. Response: Both. He has to take work off to go to trainings, he reads and repairs meters, and his raise is for that work and partly to incentivize his position.

-Scott Larsen: Let me make a comment about the water tank. I assume most of you are on city water. The original system was put in in the 1960's. thin wall 4" PVC pipe. Last summer we had 3-4 breaks in that line. 60 year old PVC pipe doesn't cut it. In order to fix that we have to put in new lines to meet state requirements. If we don't fix that, the water system could go out.

-Aubri Buehler: I don't think anyone is talking about the pipes, they are talking about the tank itself. -Scott Larsen: We have parts of the Town that don't have sufficient water pressure or gallons per minute for fire suppression. -Aubri Buehler: That's on the county. Is the Town getting any money from the county for that? -JR Trotter: Is the county participating in the water system? It benefits the county also, fire structure for the whole valley. -Celeni Richins: The county does not. We have approached them. -Nedra Shepherd: Is there something we can do? -Celeni Richins: Yes, there is something we should do. We need to look into that. -JR Trotter: The county would have a fit if we didn't provide fire protection. Why isn't the county participating. -Celeni Richins: We definitely need to approach them more aggressively, but this is off topic for tonight.

-Justin Carlile: One thing I had, because I am over the cemetery I do get an extra \$200 dealing with mortuaries, families, etc. One thing I brought up and I got shut down, currently Town residents and County residents pay the same fees. It comes back to a county/town issue where county residents help the Town with the 24th and other things and it's a weird hard dynamic to straddle but people don't get that we do have maintenance at the cemetery, park, town hall and it should be more for county residents to rent these. If I can get some support I will gladly put that on before my time is up here.

-Justin Carlile: The way I do the math the increase is closer to 120%, I don't know how the county does their calculations but I'd like to sit down and ask them because I know it's an increase but we are just looking to a little over double the revenue.

-Unknown Commenter: I think you should use the money from the auction to the park bathrooms. -Justin Carlile: that's a discussion we need to have with the committee and the bishops coming up.

-Unknown Commenter: I would like to say with the different opinions, maintaining the cemetery, roads, town hall, etc. You guys have done pretty good for years with what little you have. -Celeni Richins: Wallsburg Town works hard to stretch the dollars we have and I hope that's obvious, we apply for grants and we do everything we can.

-JoAnn Batty: This is off topic, but does Wallsburg Town have zoning laws here? -Celeni Richins: Yes, we do. -JoAnn Batty: Good. Its such a beautiful area we live in here and you look just around the corner and its just a mess. It's a black eye to Wallsburg. We should charge them for that. -Justin Carlile: I've had a lot of comments that we are over developing, we've have one development since 1980's. It's the valley that is over growing and we have no control over what happens in the county. As soon as you get out of Town limits we have no say in what happens. -JoAnn Batty: It's the junk I'm talking about. The appearance. It gives us a black eye. -Justin Carlile: We are working on sending out letters about that.

-Terri Eisel: Before we finish, I just want to touch on one thing. Our meetings are public meetings. Council meetings the first Thursday of every month. Work meetings the third Thursday of every month. They are public meetings. No one shows up, but then something like this happens and you're all here to attack us. Come to these meetings, all of these issues have been discussed and no one is here. The recordings are online. The agendas are posted out here on the doors and the post office, within 24 hours before each meeting. It is all available online. Utah Public Notice website. -Lynda Thompson: Isn't it supposed to be posted a certain time before every meeting? -Terri Eisel: It is, 24 hours. -Lynda Thompson: Okay what about public hearings. -Terri Eisel: Two weeks in the newspaper. -Lynda Thompson: 3 weeks? This was posted a week ago. -Alisha O'Driscoll: I can send you copies of proof of publication, it was posted four times in the newspaper. -Clint Allen: Our Town Council meetings are held the first Thursday of every month. -Celeni Richins: This specific meeting had to be held on a day when no other county meetings were held, so we had to make special arrangements. -Lynda Thompson: 3 weeks. It had to be posted. And it was posted 8 days ago. -Celeni Richins: It ran 3 times in the paper. -Alisha O'Driscoll: It ran 4 times. -Kent Payne: No it did not. -Alisha O'Driscoll: I can send you the proof of publications. -Kent Payne: It ran the 9th and the 14th, that's not quite 14 days. I took a picture that was posted on the 8th. -Terri Eisel: this is an opportunity for you guys to let us know how you want to be notified. What can we do to help you guys be notified of our meetings. Alisha goes above and beyond to notify you, she has stepped up to the plate and cleaned up a lot of messes and is doing an excellent job to do things the way they legally need to be done. Instead of attacking just ask a question, its not a big deal we can get those proof of publications for you, just ask.

-Yvonne Thompson: I make barely \$30,000 a year, there's a lot that make less than me, it's hard. Its concerning.

-Terri Eisel: And as far as the park goes, I have been working hard with the county the past few months, we all pay into the park special service district. I approached them and they have all kinds of money that we have been paying into. I have been working with them to get our piece of the pie to clean up the park and the bathroom and the spring creek. They are willing to help us. Justin and I have met with them multiple times and they are very supportive, just need to know about them.

-Justin Carlile: To address Yvonne's questions, there are resources available for help through the state with utilities. Im not sure how it all works, but there are resources.

-Terri Eisel: At the county clerk office they can help you apply. If you meet that limit, you get some relief on your property taxes. -Justin Carlile: Our portion of the taxes is low, get the help through the state if you can get it.

-Heather Hicken: With this reaction from everybody with this proposed budget, what are the future steps as you take into account all of the questions and comments, how do we proceed forward, what do we do from here? Is there a sit down discussion? A new proposed budget?

-Celeni Richins: That is the next part of the meeting, and that is adopting a resolution to finalize the tax rate and budget for the fiscal year.

-Terri Eisel: However the school district postponed their decision last night. After hearing public comment they continued the decision portion to another meeting.

-Justin Carlile: I've done the math on my house and my taxes. So last year my taxes were \$1900. This year with no increase it will drop to \$1888. With the increase mine will go from \$1900 to \$2400. If the school district drops theirs and we drop ours or increase it a little we are just feeding from one hand to the other. The county raises taxes every other year, so next year they will raise theirs again like they did last year and there's just never a good time to do it.

-Celeni Richins: Before last year, Wallsburg Town hasn't raised the tax rate for 18 years.

-Unknown Commenter: Can the decision be postponed until the revenue is figured out with the rate the county calculated?

-Celeni Richins: The next portion of the meeting is to discuss that option.

-Kent Payne: I was just wondering if we don't have money to maintain what we have why are we annexing property into the Town limits? That's just creating more problems. -Justin Carlile: There has been one development, their taxes are coming and those newer houses are bringing in more taxes to the Town. -Clint Allen: That's where it doesn't feel fair. If the Town was bigger there would be more funds to maintain it but its not. You guys complain that you don't want growth but you want growth to fund it. But if we stay small and don't get any additional revenue then who pays for that? We have to. We have to pay for maintenance and repairs. -Kent Payne: My choice would be to roto mill all the roads and maybe it'll slow people down.

-Clint Allen: We're about there. You just have to decide what direction we want our community to go. Do we want to have money to maintain it or stay where were at and things keep falling apart and we cant fix them, that's realistically where we're at and where we're headed.

-Bob Piscitelli: I guess my main concern is that we haven't had a raise in 18 years, but do we have to make up that 18 years in one year? Why does it have to be that big of a jump? I understand the reasons, but we can't make that up in 1 year.

-Justin Carlile: If we do go up the full increase that doesn't mean we'll have all the money to fix everything next year. Its going to take time to build up those funds. (Unintelligible Comment) -Justin Carlile: Someone better run for my spot, because I'm taking my name off tomorrow.

-Bob Piscitelli: if it takes 5 years to get a grant, the road is going to have to be redone in 5 years. -Celeni Richins: Exactly. At that point we'll have to chip seal what just got done and do the next section.

-Unknown Commenter: It's all of the county traffic driving through our roads destroying them.

-Doyle Graham: We have a very good community here. I was on the Town Board for 13 years, I have donated a whole lot of time to this Town. If we publicly flog these people and they resign, who is going to take that job? We have to support our Town. 186% is huge, I'm not in favor of it. But we have to come up with a solution. If no one takes their jobs, where are we at? We won't have a Town. What do we want to do? Why don't we step up and help these guys.

5. Adopt Resolution (Form PT-800) – Action Item

- a. Resolution Adopting Final Tax Rates and Budgets for Fiscal Year Entities - County of Wasatch, Year 2024.

It is hereby resolved that the governing body of Wallsburg Town approves the following property tax rate and revenue for the year: (Approved Revenue) (Approved Tax Rate).

Motion: Scott Larsen moves to postpone the decision to give time to reconsider and adjust and take into account the feedback received tonight. Second: Terri Eisel Vote: Unanimous

- b. Adjourn Time: 8:41PM

Scott Larsen thanked everyone for attending. Terri Eisel notified everyone of the next meeting and invited them to participate.

Motion: Justin Carlile moves to adjourn Second: Scott Larsen Vote: Unanimous