

NORTH OGDEN CITY COUNCIL RETREAT MINUTES

November 8, 2024

The North Ogden City Council convened on November 8, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. at North Ogden City Hall at 515 East 2600 North.

Notice of time, place, and agenda of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the municipal office and posted to the Utah State Website on November 5, 2024.

Notice of the annual meeting schedule was posted on the bulletin board at the municipal office and posted to the Utah State Website on December 13, 2023.

Note: The time stamps indicated in blue correspond with the recording of this meeting, which can be located on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCriqbePBxTucXEzRr6fclhQ/videos> or by requesting a copy of the audio file from the North Ogden City Recorder.

PRESENT:

S. Neal Berube	Mayor
Ryan Barker	Council Member
Blake Cevering	Council Member
Jay D Dalpiaz	Council Member (Zoom)
Chris Pulver	Council Member
Christina Watson	Council Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Jon Call	City Manager/Attorney
Rian Santoro	City Recorder
Dave Espinoza	Public Works Director/Assistant City Manager
Bryce Nelson	Administrative Services Manager
Brian Eynon	Chief of Police
Jami Jones	Finance Director (Zoom)

VISITORS:

Wilf Sommerkorn
Susan Kilborn (Zoom)
Phillip Swanson (Zoom)
Kevin Burns (Zoom)
Brenda Ashdown (Zoom)

Mayor Berube called the meeting to order and Council Member Barker offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

BUDGET RETREAT AGENDA

Please note: Due to the length of the audio file, time stamps could not be added to the minutes.

1. CITY COUNCIL TRAINING

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call introduced Wilf Sommerkorn, highlighting his extensive background in urban planning, which began in the 1980s and included leadership roles in Davis County, Salt Lake City, and Salt Lake County. Wilf, who retired after decades of service, continued his involvement in the field as the Associate Director for the Utah Land Use Institute and previously chaired the Utah Environmental Protection Agency. His academic credentials include a Bachelor's degree in Geography and Geology and a Master's in Urban Planning.

During the training session, Wilf led an interactive discussion with the Council on effective decision-making processes, emphasizing a conversational approach where Council Members could ask questions and engage in dialogue. Wilf focused on the dynamics of group decision-making, drawing from his 40 years of experience in urban planning. He introduced the concept of "collective intelligence" and shared examples from history and modern studies that demonstrate how diverse groups often make better decisions than individuals. He referenced Sir Francis Galton's 1906 experiment at an English country fair, where the average guess of a group about the weight of an ox was only one pound off from the actual weight, highlighting how groups can arrive at accurate conclusions when they operate independently. Another example he shared was from The Perfect Swarm, where a class of students collectively predicted Academy Award winners with greater accuracy than individuals. Wilf emphasized that the key conditions for effective group decision-making are diversity, independent thinking, and a sufficient number of participants to ensure statistically significant results. He encouraged Council Members to consider broader community perspectives, as public hearings often attract vocal minorities, especially those with negative opinions, which may not reflect the views of the majority.

Wilf also highlighted the importance of dissent in group decision-making. He explained how dissent can help surface concerns and alternative viewpoints that others might be hesitant to express. Citing examples from investment clubs, he noted that groups with more disagreement often make better decisions than those where everyone agrees. However, he stressed that dissent must be constructive and respectful, as disruptive dissent can undermine the decision-making process.

He also discussed how group dynamics can influence decision-making, such as the "cascade" effect, where the first speaker in a discussion can sway the rest of the group, potentially limiting the diversity of ideas and leading to suboptimal decisions. Wilf encouraged Council Members to think independently and not simply conform to the majority view, using the example of a jury deliberation from 12 Angry Men to illustrate the positive impact of a single dissenting voice.

Wilf also discussed the role of staff in decision-making, emphasizing that staff should provide information and recommendations, but ultimate decisions should rest with the Council. He noted that Council Members should feel confident in making independent judgments, especially in areas where they have some experience, while still listening to staff expertise.

Public input, Wilf explained, is crucial for legislative decisions but is generally less relevant for administrative matters. He encouraged Council Members to disclose any ex parte contact they had with the public to maintain transparency.

In terms of voting procedures, Wilf recommended randomizing the order of voting to avoid the pressures of sequential voting, which can influence members to conform to the opinions of those who vote first. He also mentioned group polarization, where initial agreement in a group can lead to increasingly extreme positions, and stressed the importance of maintaining a balance of perspectives to avoid this. Wilf stressed that Councils should encourage diverse viewpoints, be mindful of groupthink, and ensure independent thinking to improve the decision-making process. He also suggested a method for anonymous voting to avoid peer pressure, although acknowledging that Utah law requires votes to be recorded in the minutes.

In closing, Wilf emphasized the importance of maintaining respectful, collaborative relationships within the Council and with staff and understanding the dynamics of group decision-making. He encouraged Council Members to remain aware of how group forces can influence their judgment and decision-making processes to ensure fair, transparent, and effective governance.

2. BETTER UNDERSTANDING COUNCIL AND STAFF

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call led an activity aimed at fostering better understanding among participants regarding each other's perspectives and decision-making processes.

The conversation focused on the challenges of ordinance interpretation and the role of staff in enforcing City codes. Key points discussed included the complexities staff face when interpreting City ordinances, especially when opinions on enforcement differ. An example cited was the difficulty in distinguishing a fence from a hedge, which highlighted the challenges staff face in making decisions that align with the law. Staff, particularly the Planning Director, are responsible for these interpretations, but Council Members sometimes question these decisions, leading to confusion about enforcement responsibilities.

The group also discussed the tension that arises when Council Members request exceptions to City rules, leading to inconsistencies in enforcement. One example given was winter parking regulations, where staff had historically issued warnings before towing, but past administrations had waived tickets to appease the public. The conversation emphasized that exceptions should only be made consistently and through proper channels, such as updating the ordinance when necessary.

The role of the Mayor and City Manager in guiding staff-council relations was also discussed. Mayor Berube stressed the importance of the City Manager handling staff directives to avoid confusion and ensure authority is maintained. It was noted that Council Members should respect the boundaries of their assigned areas and defer to the City Manager for broader issues. If disagreements arise or issues are not addressed, Council Members were encouraged to approach the City Manager for resolution.

Further, the group discussed the value of Council Members being involved in various departments to improve communication and understanding of operations. However, it was emphasized that Council Members should avoid micromanaging staff work and instead act as resources and advocates for their areas. The importance of making decisions based on credible information was highlighted, with a reminder that emotional input from citizens can sometimes cloud objective judgment.

The group recessed for a ten-minute break.

3. CITY OVERVIEW AND CONCERNS

a. Trends in Building and Planning

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call discussed the fluctuating trends in building permits.

The spike in permits in 2021, driven by significant developments like Patriot Point, was mentioned, and with many subdivision applications expected in 2024, the City anticipates a potential surge in building permits in the coming years, which may require additional staff or contracted inspectors to manage.

The Council agreed that they need to be prepared for this surge in permits, as development projects often take years to move from approval to construction. The discussion reinforced the importance of transparency, consistency, and careful planning to manage the City's growth effectively. The group noted that while building permit numbers for 2023 and 2024 didn't appear substantial, there was a general sense that the volume of activity would likely increase significantly in the next year or two, particularly given the number of subdivisions approved for 2024.

The conversation then shifted to the types of building projects being approved, with a particular focus on custom homes, which are more complex to inspect than standard tract homes. Custom homes, especially those incorporating unique elements like imported materials, require more time for inspections, which could further impact the workload of the Building Department.

b. Trends in Recreation

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call discussed the City's recreation programs, which have been affected by the pandemic. The Council discussed trends in participation, noting that some sports, like baseball and softball, have seen fluctuating participation numbers. For instance, while baseball and softball had a spike in interest at one point, that interest seems to have leveled off. A key observation was that certain programs, like summer camps, have been consistently full with waiting lists, suggesting a high demand for these types of activities. The group also discussed whether the City should expand or shift its recreation offerings to meet changing demands, considering that sports like soccer are popular year-round, while other sports have more seasonal participation.

One Council Member raised concerns about whether the City should compete with private organizations that offer similar youth programs, especially as new, competitive youth leagues become more prevalent in the State. This prompted further discussion about the role of government in providing recreational services and whether resources should be directed toward areas where the City can make the most impact.

There was also a discussion about the goal of recreation programs, with some Council Members emphasizing the importance of providing meaningful experiences for participants, rather than simply increasing the number of participants. This led to a broader conversation about setting clear goals for the City's recreation programs, which could help determine whether the City is meeting its objectives and whether the available resources are sufficient.

Ultimately, the conversation underscored the need for the City to evaluate its current recreation programs, assess participation trends, and determine how best to allocate resources to meet the needs and expectations of residents.

c. Trends in Policing

Chief Eynon provided a comprehensive update on the status of the Police Department, highlighting key achievements and ongoing initiatives. He reported that the department currently has 21 out of 22 sworn positions filled, with active recruitment underway for new hires, particularly focusing on lateral hires. Additionally, the department is seeking to fill a vacant Community Service Officer (CSO) position, and all civilian positions and crossing guard roles are currently staffed.

A primary focus for the department has been the introduction of new core values, which have been integrated into officer recognition programs, including employee of the month and awards for exceptional performance. These values aim to align the department's mission with its daily operations and promote a culture of accountability. Chief Eynon noted significant cultural changes within the department over the past five months, including a greater emphasis on accountability and leadership development, and reported a positive shift in morale. The department has restructured certain duties, shifting responsibilities from lieutenants to sergeants, which now include overseeing areas such as training, drone operations, the canine unit, and scheduling. Additionally, monthly "comp stat" meetings have been introduced to track data and assess operational goals.

Chief Eynon highlighted the department's proactive approach to officer wellness, noting that an external company has been contracted to support officer health, particularly in addressing alcohol abuse. He also announced new uniform standards, including dark uniforms for patrol officers and more business-casual options for detectives and support staff.

The department has increased its focus on securing grants, aiming to raise its grant funding from \$163,000 to \$500,000. Among other updates, the police vehicle logos have been redesigned and received positive feedback. A new K9 unit, a narcotics detection dog named Anya, has been added, with Officer Griggs selected as the handler. The department is also progressing toward accreditation through the Utah Chiefs of Police Association (UCOPA), which is expected to be completed in approximately 2 years and will open up additional grant opportunities.

Training remains a priority, with all officers on track to meet the required 40 hours of annual training. This includes topics such as de-escalation, mental health issues, and sexual assault investigations, along with specialized firearm qualifications. To enhance training, new tools for tactical training have been introduced.

The department continues its community engagement through programs like National Night Out Against Crime, the Citizens Police Academy, and the Shop with a Hero initiative. Additionally, Chief Eynon reported that the department is collaborating with local youth groups, particularly those involved with the skate park, to improve community relations. The department is also exploring the establishment of a Tri-City Explorer Program with neighboring cities, aimed at providing law enforcement training to young adults and potentially aiding in future recruitment efforts.

Chief Eynon also shared operational statistics, noting that the department is meeting its goals for the year. He emphasized the shift toward proactive policing, with fewer reactive calls for service, but more officer-initiated activities like traffic stops and patrol checks. He expressed satisfaction with a 40% reduction in violent crimes from 2021 to 2024, attributing the decrease to increased officer presence. On the topic of Community Service Officers (CSOs), Chief Eynon noted that their workload has increased, particularly in code enforcement, though only a small percentage resulted in violations.

Regarding technology needs, Chief Eynon requested funding for 2 additional CSOs, totaling approximately \$160,000. Also requested are upgrades to body-worn and in-car camera systems, including license plate readers (LPRs) for seven police vehicles.

These investments are aimed at supporting officers and improving public safety. The department's performance and ongoing efforts to improve efficiency, crime reduction, and community relations were also discussed.

The meeting then shifted to a discussion on recruitment and retention, with a particular focus on lateral hiring. A \$5,000 signing bonus for recruits is still in place, and there was discussion about incentivizing current officers to refer new candidates through a referral bonus. Chief Eynon emphasized the importance of hiring candidates who are a good fit for the department's culture, even if it means waiting for the right candidate. Morale within the department has significantly improved, with officers expressing satisfaction and no desire to leave.

The leadership, particularly the Chief and Lieutenants, were commended for fostering a supportive work environment and promoting leadership development. The Mayor and Council Members reiterated that public safety remains the City's top priority, and the department's leadership has been instrumental in driving positive change.

Chief Eynon concluded by emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy, accountable police culture, and reaffirming his commitment to serving the community.

The group agreed to break for lunch before continuing with the next agenda items.

4. 2031 CITY CAPITAL PROJECTS

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call led a discussion on capital projects with a focus on the importance of long-term financial planning, specifically targeting years within a five-year plan, from fiscal years 2025 to 2031. He emphasized that while projects in the next few years are planned, the main focus is on where the City wants to be in the long term.

Updates include several park and infrastructure improvements, such as the McGriff trail connection, renovations at Orton and McGriff parks, field and restroom repairs, and upgrades to playgrounds, trails, and landscaping, with some repairs funded by a special budget due to flood damage. Additionally, there are significant funds allocated for parking lot improvements across various parks due to a previously unmet need for structured maintenance, to distribute these projects across five years.

A major discussion centered on the Community Pond Project, which has an estimated budget placeholder of \$2 million for the park development of the project. Council Members discussed alternative funding sources, such as a grant from RAMP and potential participation from other agencies. The Council also debated the level of financial risk involved in the pond relocation to support commercial development along 2700 North. This discussion raised questions about how much risk the City should take on itself, as well as the value of partnerships with developers who could potentially reduce excavation costs. However, there was concern about the potential financial risk if the City advanced funds for the project but the commercial development did not progress. The management of expenses for long-term projects and understanding the allocation of City and external funds for these projects was discussed at length. It was noted that the City will review detailed budget estimates in February, allowing for adjustments to match both long-term and immediate needs. The City has an emergency fund of \$1 million reserved for immediate needs, primarily roads, as discussed in the fiscal planning.

The meeting then turned to Barker Park as a critical, but currently unfunded, community project. Members emphasized that despite its high estimated cost, it remains a significant long-term goal for community use and potential economic benefit. Suggestions included exploring phased funding, grants, and partnerships with local businesses and residents to offset costs while highlighting the strategic necessity of infrastructure planning before piecemeal development. The discussion then centered on maintaining the balance between long-term park goals and immediate maintenance needs, noting that prioritizing Barker Park might require pushing other projects to later dates.

Council Members voiced that setting clear priorities and strategies is essential to aligning funding decisions with the City's broader vision, potentially affecting the need for future tax adjustments.

5. NORTH OGDEN CITY LONG-TERM GOALS AND PRIORITIES

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call led a discussion on North Ogden's priorities, beginning with a focus on water management efforts, particularly in the western areas. Jon explained that while there is interest in improving water flow control and upgrading sewer lines along 2600 North, these discussions are still in the preliminary stages, with no agreements finalized. The potential upgrades aim to address infrastructure demands and reduce long-term costs.

Council Members were encouraged to propose ideas without criticism, leading to a comprehensive list of potential priorities. Suggestions included maintaining community

amenities such as the Senior Center, focusing on public safety, and considering a transportation utility fee to support infrastructure maintenance.

The Council discussed the City's parks and public spaces, especially Barker Park, considering community interest in park improvements. Debates centered around allocating additional funds for upgrades, particularly in the amphitheater area, and aligning these upgrades with the City's long-term priorities. Council Members stressed the importance of setting clear priorities for the next 5-10 years, focusing on maintaining and enhancing existing parks, adding new facilities like pickleball courts and trails, and shaping the image North Ogden wants to project to residents and visitors.

Budget considerations emerged as a key theme, with discussions on creating a mission statement to guide financial decisions in alignment with the City's core values. These values and priorities include public safety, fiscal accountability, economic planning, community unity, and North Ogden City Employees.

Ongoing discussions about growth and development were highlighted as important for maintaining citizen well-being, which encompasses public safety, community engagement, balanced housing, and parks and recreation.

Council Members also recognized the critical role of infrastructure in supporting future growth, especially public safety facilities and street management. As North Ogden anticipates growth, planning for these resources will be essential. The Council discussed the need for a balanced commercial economy to alleviate property tax burdens, particularly for retirees.

Further discussion shifted to enhancing City marketing and resident engagement. Ideas included clearer signage and fostering a strong community identity, with initiatives like local pride awards and increased outreach to new residents through informational mailers. The group highlighted that community well-being could only be achieved when residents feel valued, which in turn fosters support for City expenditures. The Council discussed how priorities like community events and amenities could fit within the broader City goals.

Employee retention and attraction were also major points of discussion, emphasizing the importance of North Ogden becoming a preferred place of employment. The Council

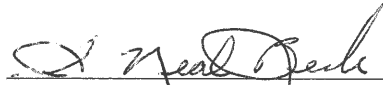
recognized that achieving City goals requires a supportive work environment and valued employees.

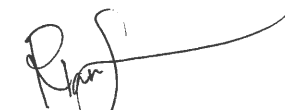
The meeting concluded with a review of commercial development plans and City projects. The Council discussed ongoing developments in the pond area and the importance of clear agreements before committing significant funds. Other topics included RDA projects, property tax adjustments, and the partnership with a private company to build a soccer field in Barker Park.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Watson motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.


S. Neal Berube, Mayor


Rian Santoro
City Recorder



12/3/24
Date Approved