

MINUTES OF THE DRAPER CITY COUNCIL RETREAT HELD ON SATURDAY, MARCH 22, 2025, IN THE DRAPER CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1020 EAST PIONEER ROAD, DRAPER, UTAH

PRESENT: Mayor Troy K. Walker, and Councilmembers Mike Green (excused at 1:00pm), Bryn Heather Johnson, Fred Lowry, Tasha Lowery, and Marsha Vawdrey

EXCUSED:

STAFF: Mike Barker, City Manager; Kellie Challburg, Assistant City Manager; Scott Cooley, City Engineer and Public Works Director; Rich Ferguson, Chief of Police; Traci Gundersen, City Attorney; Jennifer Jastremsky, Community Development Director; Malena Murray, HR Director; Rhett Ogden, Parks and Recreation Director; Clint Smith, Fire Chief; Linda Peterson, Communications Director; Nicole Smedley, City Recorder; Jake Sorensen, Network Manager; and John Vuyk, Finance Director

1. Call to Order by Mayor Troy K. Walker

2. Fiscal Report

Finance Director John Vuyk provided an overview of fund accounting, including governmental funds, proprietary funds, impact fee funds, and internal service funds. Mr. Vuyk presented data on expenses, revenues, and other income sources since 2015. A comparison between City staffing levels and population growth was shown, along with a projection of the fund balance. Mr. Vuyk responded to questions from the Council following the presentation.

Department Director Reports

Fire Chief Clint Smith reported on the Fire Department's accomplishments in 2024 and presented goals for 2025. These goals included reducing daily reliance on overtime shifts and improving the efficiency of deployable resources. Chief Smith noted operational improvements associated with four-handed staffing and explained a request for three additional full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in the upcoming fiscal year.

In response to a question from the Council, Chief Smith stated that experience had shown reliance on part-time overtime help to be unsustainable. He briefly discussed National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1710. Chief Smith also reported current response times and emphasized the need for a

fire station on the west side of Draper. In response to a question from Mayor Walker, Chief Smith stated that the wait time for a new apparatus was at least four years.

Human Resource Director Malena Murray provided an overview of the progression of the Human Resources (HR) Department, noting its evolution from a primarily administrative gatekeeping role to a more strategic function focused on organizational culture and employee engagement. Ms. Murray presented staffing statistics for Draper City from 2015 through 2025, as well as current staffing levels in surrounding cities. She reported that combined departmental requests for the upcoming fiscal year totaled more than 50 new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions and advised a best practice ratio of one HR FTE per 100 City employees.

Ms. Murray reported improvements in HR processes and outlined her goals for the department. In response to questions from the Council, she stated that an open internship position, which had not transitioned to an FTE, would potentially cost less than creating a new FTE.

The Council recessed for a lunch break.

Police Chief Rich Ferguson presented the following goals for the Police Department, each accompanied by supporting objectives:

- Goal 1: Achieve ranking as one of the lowest crime rate cities in Utah among cities with populations over 50,000.
- Goal 2: Respond to, mitigate, and exceed national standards for all emergencies, including accidental, natural, and man-made incidents.
- Goal 3: Promote employee development and establish the department as a destination workplace where officers and support staff choose to spend their entire careers.
- Goal 4: Ensure a safe transportation environment and develop strategies to maintain that safety.

Chief Ferguson reported a reduction in vehicle burglaries and traffic accidents, along with an increase in traffic citations, noting the department's focus on public education and accident prevention. He reported a 51.4% increase in total calls for service from 2022 to 2024, without a corresponding increase in officer staffing. Chief Ferguson emphasized the need to prepare the

department for upcoming development at The Point, which would ultimately require five additional full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

In response to a Council question, Chief Ferguson stated that large apartment complexes required a substantial amount of department resources. In response to a question from Mayor Walker regarding vehicle replacement, Chief Ferguson reported that the department had a solid plan in place.

3. **Discussion: City Council Goals and Priorities**

Mayor Walker stated that his primary priorities were ensuring the City provided fair compensation, employed high-quality personnel, and maintained adequate staffing levels to accomplish necessary work. He identified capital projects as his next priority, specifically a public works facility and a fire station on the west side, potentially including a police substation. Mayor Walker also cited parks and trails as an additional priority. In response, Chief Smith expressed support for a shared west side station serving both the Fire and Police Departments.

Councilmember T. Lowery mentioned the idea of a community center and emphasized the importance of community buy-in. Councilmember Vawdrey expressed interest in promoting volunteerism. City Manager Mike Barker discussed the value of leveraging resources through volunteer efforts and the strategic use of technology. A staff member noted that the City of South Jordan operated a successful combined fire and police facility.

A majority of the Council expressed support for exploring the possibility of a combined fire and police facility on the west side. Mayor Walker stated that determining a suitable location and cost would be the first step in that process.

City Engineer and Public Works Director Scott Cooley reported that the Public Works Department had exceeded its available office and storage space. Mayor Walker stated that a general obligation bond would currently be the only viable funding mechanism for a new public works facility and noted that location and cost would need to be determined. Mayor Walker also discussed the need for water infrastructure projects and suggested the Council may need to evaluate current water rates. It was noted that land within The Point development may be available for a future City facility.

Councilmember Green stated that he had emailed a list of his priorities. Communications Director Linda Peterson requested input from the Council regarding what they felt would be appropriate to include in a community-wide survey and what topics they would like to see addressed. She identified accessibility as a priority and noted that the last general community satisfaction survey was likely conducted in 2020. Councilmember Green suggested including questions to gauge community support for a bond. Councilmember Vawdrey emphasized the importance of careful wording in the survey questions.

Councilmember T. Lowery identified open space and trails as a priority. City Manager Mike Barker discussed the ongoing maintenance responsibilities associated with parks and trails and asked the Council to consider the desired level of service in terms of personnel and equipment. Councilmember Green expressed the importance of protecting and maintaining a lifestyle valued by the community. He also noted that David Cloward, Chair of the Tree Committee, had previously spoken about the need for a dedicated arborist on staff.

Mayor Walker asked the Council whether they were interested in commissioning a transportation study with the goal of implementing a transportation utility fee. Multiple Councilmembers indicated they were not in favor of proceeding with the study. Mayor Walker then suggested considering the implementation of a park fee. In response to a question from the Mayor, all Councilmembers expressed interest in stabilizing the property tax rate.

Councilmember F. Lowry stated that additional understanding of the transportation utility fee was needed before making a decision. Mayor Walker explained that revenues from the fee would be directed specifically toward road maintenance. Councilmembers F. Lowry and Green expressed support for completing a study to determine how much revenue a transportation utility fee could generate.

The Council discussed potential questions for an upcoming community survey. Communications Director Linda Peterson cautioned against survey fatigue and recommended narrowing the survey's focus and drafting questions that would provide meaningful insights for the Council in 2025.

The Council and staff discussed landmark signage and wayfinding signage. Communications Director Linda Peterson noted that branding was an important component of the signage strategy.

Community Development Director Jen Jastremsky provided an overview of House Bill 37 and its potential impact on Draper. Ms. Jastremsky stated that additional staffing was needed in her department. Staff discussed ongoing code enforcement challenges and the possibility of shifting code enforcement jurisdiction from the criminal courts to an Administrative Law Judge. The Council and staff also discussed short-term rentals, and staff clarified that the City had the option to prohibit short-term rentals if desired.

Councilmember Green was excused at 1:00pm due to military responsibilities.

City Engineer and Public Works Director Scott Cooley expressed hesitation about including questions related to a new public works facility in a community survey, stating concern that residents might expect the work to be completed regardless of whether a new facility was constructed. Mr. Cooley discussed the realities of maintaining the current level of service and emphasized the importance of prioritizing water infrastructure projects. He noted that his department had implemented several measures to increase efficiency and stretch available funding.

Mr. Cooley stated that The Point remained a significant unknown and referenced existing traffic challenges in the area. In response to questions from the Council, he identified parking as his primary current concern related to The Point. He affirmed that his team was working diligently to ensure high-quality construction at the site.

Parks and Recreation Director Rhett Ogden stated that Draper was recognized nationally for many of its parks and recreation amenities. He emphasized that health, safety, and wellbeing were critical needs, and expressed the view that parks and recreation were not luxuries but essential components of quality of life. Mr. Ogden noted that, to his knowledge, Draper had more trail miles within its boundaries than any other city west of the Mississippi River, with the City owning, operating, and maintaining 128 miles of trails.

Mr. Ogden reported that members of his staff had expressed concern that while the City continued to develop new facilities, it did not always keep pace

with the maintenance needs of existing infrastructure. He stated that staff consistently met operational demands but echoed concerns shared by other department heads regarding employee burnout. Mr. Ogden noted that his department had specific needs for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Barker asked Mr. Ogden to address how volunteers and outsourcing could possibly lighten the need for FTEs in his department. Mr. Ogden spoke of volunteer groups that already helped his department. He said a volunteer coordinator would be a valuable addition to ensure City needs were coordinated with volunteer availability. Responding to a question from the Council, Mr. Ogden said the City had implemented a Draper-resident-only registration period for recreation activities to ensure that residents were served. He said he would like to outsource mowing, and said if the City contracted some of the mowing, at least three FTEs and some seasonal staff would be available to fill other needs. Mr. Ogden added that outsourcing mowing made sense fiscally, and estimated the cost would be \$165,000 for a season, which would be more than returned in staff and equipment costs.

Responding to a question about a full-time arborist, Mr. Ogden said his department did a lot of tree work, but the tree work often had to wait until the end of a season when other needs slowed down. A majority of the Council appeared to support putting mowing out to bid.

City Attorney Traci Gundersen said Draper City had two full-time employees in the Legal Department doing mostly civil legal work, with part-time prosecution services outsourced.

Assistant City Manager Kellie Challburg said she requested a full-time facilities custodial position to service City Hall in the evenings, as well as a part-time emergency manager position for the next fiscal year. Ms. Challburg said she would also be supportive of a volunteer coordinator position. She reported the Town Center Station Area Plan (SAP) was submitted to Wasatch Front Regional Council.

Network Manager Jake Sorensen said his department was made up of three full-time individuals. Mr. Sorensen spoke of an AI conference he recently attended, and said he believed AI would be a tool that could be leveraged in the future to help employees be more efficient and cost effective.

Communication Director Linda Peterson said community building and community engagement were the primary focuses in the Communications Department. Ms. Peterson asked for feedback from the Council regarding the City's online merchandise store versus giveaways during events like Draper Days. It was suggested that quality of the items would influence interest in purchasing the merchandise.

Ms. Peterson asked the Council for input regarding digital signage as an asset for the City. Staff commented that the Sign Code would need to be amended. It was suggested that a nice digital sign could replace the clutter caused by multiple banners and posters. Councilmember F. Lowry suggested placing a digital sign at the Fire Department. Draper Park and Rambling Road were suggested as additional location options. Mayor Walker expressed support.

Ms. Peterson said she would appreciate support for needed additional staff in the Communications Department.

City Recorder Nicole Smedley reported the Passport Office was running smoothly, and said the Recorder's Office was gearing up for elections.

Councilmember Vawdrey commented that the Draper Historical Society and Arts Council were not fully associated with the City, but used City facilities. She said she suspected the Historical Society was probably ten years from extinction, and questioned what would be done with all of the materials at the museum. Councilmember Vawdrey suggested the two groups should be formally brought under the umbrella of the City. The Council discussed the suggestion. Councilmember Vawdrey said the Historic Preservation Commission had been vibrant and active in recruiting, and perhaps encroached on the Historical Society's job. Councilmember Johnson commented that the Historical Society had not been progressing. The Council and staff discussed the groups and options going forward.

4. Adjournment

Mayor Walker thanked everyone for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 2:52 pm.