

CLEARFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM WORK SESSION
March 18, 2025

City Building
55 South State Street
Clearfield City, Utah

PRESIDING: Mayor Mark Shepherd

PRESENT: Councilmember Karece Thompson, Councilmember Nike Peterson, Councilmember Tim Roper, Councilmember Megan Ratchford, Mayor Mark Shepherd, Councilmember Dakota Wurth

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager JJ Allen, Assistant City Manager & Economic Development Director Spencer Brimley, Community Services Director Eric Howes, City Attorney Stuart Williams, Police Chief Kelly Bennett, Community Relations Director Shaundra Rushton, Public Works Director Adam Favero, Community Services Deputy Director Curtis Dickson, Finance Manager Rich Knapp, City Recorder Nancy Dean, Deputy City Recorder Chersty Titensor, Public Works Deputy Director Braden Felix, Senior Accountant Lee Naylor, Assistant Police Chief Devin Rogers, Community Development Director Stacy Millgate, Recreation Manager Kristine Conley, Human Resources Manager Ricki Miller

VISITORS: Preston Lee – Wasatch Integrated Waste Management District, Michelle Morse - Gallagher

OVERVIEW OF CLEARFIELD CITY AND GALLAGHER PARTNERSHIP

Michelle Morse, Benefits Consultant with Gallagher, the broker for the City's benefits, presented the services provided by the brokerage. JJ Allen, City Manager asked how Clearfield City's benefits compared to other municipalities. Ms. Morse said compared to other entities the City was not the cream of the crop, or did not have the best benefits, but did not have the worst. Ricki Miller, Human Resources Manager, explained the various products (such as pet insurance) that could be included in the request for proposal process through Gallagher. Financial services provided through the EAP was also discussed.

Councilmember Thompson arrived at 6:22 p.m.

DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED FEE CHANGES FOR ROOM RENTALS AT THE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER, ATHLETIC FIELD USE, 4TH OF JULY VENDORS, SPONSORSHIPS, PICKLEBALL COURT RENTALS, AND AQUATIC AND FITNESS CENTER MEMBERSHIPS

Councilmember Peterson arrived at 6:27 p.m.

Eric Howes, Community Services Director, reviewed proposed changes to various community services fees. Staff had compared Arts Center room rental fees to similar facilities and proposed reductions. Councilmember Peterson recommended that the schedule define the time included in the rental fees. Mr. Howes said they were hourly rates and would make sure the schedule indicated if there was a minimum rental. Mr. Howes explained the field use rentals would not change, but other changes were made to the fees for field lights, scoreboard rental, and a fee was

added to rent the sand volleyball courts. He reviewed the 4th of July Vendor fee changes. Mr. Howes introduced new sponsorship fees for banners at facilities and special events. Mr. Allen recommended the fee schedule indicate the sponsorship fee was on an annual basis. He reviewed the changes to the Pickleball Facility Rentals which made clarification to define what the weekend dates were.

Mr. Howes reviewed potential changes to fees at the Aquatic Center. Staff was proposing changes to the membership fees due to an approximate 21% decline in memberships and 13% decrease in the number of members compared to 2019. He explained the proposed fee schedule was meant to make the fees more user-friendly and in-line with memberships in the market. He proposed including the sales tax in the price, moving to monthly options, no additional enrollment fees and no cancellation fees. He reviewed the proposed membership fees which was intended to make the structure easier for online registration. He compared revenue after the equipment replacement amount was taken out. He recommended introducing the fee structure as the Aquatic Center's 20-year anniversary pricing. Mr. Howes was hoping the proposed changes would increase memberships and then staff would evaluate the response over six months.

He said the earliest the new pricing could be rolled out was April 1, 2025, but it was more likely the adjustments in the system would necessitate the middle or end of April. He said the actual anniversary date was June 6, 2025. Councilmember Peterson said if 20th year anniversary was part of the strategy she thought it was appropriate to coordinate with the anniversary date. Councilmember Wurth wondered if it was smart to preempt the season and start earlier. Mr. Howes said the City saw the biggest membership jumps at the beginning of the year and right before school was out. He thought mid-April would not be too late, but the further the calendar got into May, the City might miss that window.

Councilmember Thompson asked how much of the sales tax was returned to the City. Mr. Allen explained that of the 7.25% tax rate, 1% was local sales tax and of that 1%, half got allocated to Clearfield City for point of sale and the other went into a pot that was divvied up to the cities based on population. Mr. Allen said it would not be a factor in the decision. Councilmember Thompson brought up a past conversation about adding amenities. He wondered if the decline was due to competition with local gyms and apartment community gyms. He asked if the rates needed to compete with the local gyms. Mr. Howes said Staff had completed a study with VCVO about four years ago where they had recommended some changes. Mr. Howes said Staff had a discussion with the Davis School District recently where they expressed an interest in partnering, and that could be a possibility. He said he had started by including pieces of renovation in the budget and making improvements year by year. He thought renovations would help with memberships. He pointed out one of the improvements recommended in the study was a seasonal outdoor lazy river, slides, etc. similar to the Roy Aquatic Center.

DISCUSSION ON ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CONSOLIDATED FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE GREEN WASTE PROGRAM

Rich Knapp, Finance Manager, reviewed proposed changes to the Consolidated Fee Schedule. He said there had been an error previously when utility rates were adopted. The sprinkling system standby charge needed to be corrected to \$3.88 and then would increase by 2% each

January in '26 and '27. In regard to the Green Waste Program, he explained that the contract with Waste Management (WM) required a container removal fee of \$25 if people failed to opt-out during the opt-out period, which needed to be adopted and added to the Consolidated Fee Schedule.

He asked Council if they would like to look at the fees for trash containers. He said the Green Waste container would be \$10.50 but it would go up another approximately \$5 next year. He asked the Council whether there was any desire to set the garbage rates now because Staff knew Wasatch Management rates would be going up. Mr. Allen said Staff knew that Wasatch Integrated was increasing their rates by \$1. Mr. Knapp said Wasatch Integrated had confirmed the City would still get diversion incentive rate even though the resident participate rate for green waste was below 50%. Mr. Allen stated it was really about the tonnage of green waste diverted. The Council confirmed that they wanted the garbage increases in the fee schedule.

Councilmember Peterson confirmed that the container removal fee would be charged after the fees were adopted at the next Council meeting. Mr. Allen asked the City Attorney, saying that the additional fee was advertised as part of the information. Stuart Williams, City Attorney, said Staff would look into the legalities.

DISCUSSION ON THE INTERLOCAL COOPERATION TRANSPORTATION PROJECT REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENT WITH DAVIS COUNTY FOR THIRD QUARTER SALES TAX FUNDING OF THE 300 NORTH SIDEWALK EXTENSION PROJECT

Braden Felix, Deputy Public Works, explained 3rd quarter sales tax was available for transportation projects that were mapped as regional transportation cities. In this project, since the City would perform a mill and fill of 300 North, there was a short section of sidewalk that did not exist to the Rio Grande Trail. The sidewalk would be installed from 700 West to 825 West. The City applied for and was awarded \$48,500 toward that project. Councilmember Thompson verified whether the sidewalks would be ADA compliant. Mr. Felix said they would be ADA compliant.

DISCUSSION ON THE INTERLOCAL COOPERATION TRANSPORTATION PROJECT REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENT WITH DAVIS COUNTY FOR 3RD QUARTER SALES TAX FUNDING OF THE DEPOT STREET EXTENSION PROJECT

Braden Felix, Deputy Public Works Director, said Staff had submitted an application for the Depot Street Extension Project, and the County awarded \$266k that would complete the \$1.5M awarded in 2020 because they wanted to reimburse up to 80% of the cost that was in the application for property acquisition.

PROPOSED UPDATED CLEARFIELD CITY EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION STRATEGY

Ricki Miller, Human Resources Manager, reviewed the changes from the updated Clearfield City Employee Compensation Strategy as outlined in the Staff Report.

- 0% – 3% Merit Increases
- 2.9% COLA rate – use URS each January

- Elimination of the Step-in-Grade pay plan
- All full-time and 6 part-time employees on a General Pay Plan
- Creation of a part-time pay plan – possibility of \$0.50 increase each year.
- 63 part-time staff had been identified at 90% of their range or considered “topped out” and would not receive an increase
- Updated today 7 full-time employees required a one-time “catch-up” increase to reach the bottom of their pay range
- Suggested that 7 full-time employees not receive a merit increase – COLA only.

Fiscal Impact

Ms. Miller pointed out that the new compensation strategy reduced the personnel increase by 47% from the existing step-in-grade pay plans. She said the numbers included the new staffing requests. Councilmember Peterson asked whether they thought there were any departments where the same type of rapid increases could come up, or areas that might be vulnerable to higher turnover that could impact operations. Ms. Miller thought if the City kept up on COLAs they should be able to keep up with the market, barring any unforeseen random market increases. Stuart Williams, City Attorney, identified the police department as a possible department that was being affected. Councilmember Peterson said when she first came on the Council she was concerned about putting everyone under the same umbrella, where desk jobs were put against bullet-proof vests. Mr. Williams said there was still a value for the position. Paying them outside of the market could be a choice, but that was why the ranges were to follow the market. He said there was also a proposal for Council to consider an alternative proposal to put the Officers at next grade up, which would be a 5% bump above the market – but would be treated differently intentionally.

Councilmember Peterson said she understood the general pay plan, but where was the risk in parts of the organization that could see significant impacts. She wondered if recreation was another potential department. Mr. Allen acknowledged there were some employee groups on the step-in-grade plan who were able to very quickly move through their range and this new policy could inhibit that ability. He identified the groups as police, part-time recreation, aquatics, public works, utility maintenance. Ms. Miller said potentially, with PD specifically going through the range, their matrix was set up on annual increases so they did not go through the range like aquatics or departments that could jump steps. She was concerned with the Police Department that currently there was a very specific outline of what increases would look like, but the new proposal would be more vague.

Kelly Bennett, Police Chief, said the current step-in-grade had eleven steps and then the employee would top out. He thought step-in-grade had helped with retention. Those that were retained were able to make jumps yearly, but he thought they were set up in the range far enough to retain. He said there would be frustration, but employees knew this might change because it was so aggressive. He said it had been explained to his department that future compensation increases would be more policy-driven if the budget allowed but there was still some potential for increases. Mr. Williams said they had four years step-in-grade and already had some topped out. Topping employees out would be another problem. Councilmember Thompson asked if they would be above market. Mr. Williams said yes. Councilmember Thompson would not mind because the City was already competitive. He thought an evaluation should be done with any

increases. Ms. Miller said the 3% merit was not guaranteed but was dependent on their evaluations and was one reason the City wanted to transition from step-in-grade because it gave the employer flexibility to evaluate. Councilmember Peterson asked if there was any one-time in lieu of merit for employees that had topped out. Ms. Miller said it had not been defined, but could be considered.

Adam Favero, Public Works Director, pointed out that no one was overpaid in his department. He said there was an individual that had been an employee over 10 years that had time and certifications but the Public Works department had included stop-gaps in their step-in-grade plan. He said if anything, his department lost employees because of the step-in-grade and the stop-gaps to balance. He thought they would still have to have incentives for certifications to retain employees in Public Works.

Ms. Miller said she had entered the Police Department in the general pay plan, but asked the Council to consider putting the Police Department up one grade higher. She said if they were bumped up to the next grade, positions would be starting at \$31 without much of a fiscal impact because the proposal would still be the same amount because it was in the range. Mr. Allen further explained that the City would then be able to advertise for new recruits at a higher rate. Mr. Williams said it would apply to the four new officers, but they would not be making more than the current positions. Councilmember Peterson wanted to understand risks and asked for each departments' feedback on the impact to their department.

Police Department

Chief Bennett stated that 6-7 years ago the City had lost six officers to Salt Lake County but that was not the case anymore. He said there was a potential to lose officers to the County. He said Clearfield City officers were the fourth lowest starting pay in Davis County but had the third highest call volume. He hoped that an increase in grade would help them recruit the best candidates and retain them. He thought it would help put them in line with Davis County agencies that in FY25 were making \$31-32 starting wage. He agreed that the Police Department was making a good wage based on number of years, but he feared the starting wage was low. Mr. Williams pointed out that this was a unique year where the City could possibly hire three new recruits; this would be a year where the starting wage might matter more than another year because of the recruiting efforts. Councilmember Thompson acknowledged the agreed upon philosophy was to try to meet the market, so he felt that would be reasonable.

Community Services

Eric Howes, Community Services Director, said from his perspective, what Human Resources had proposed was based on the data and it was hard to argue with. He agreed with Mr. Favero about having incentives for certifications for the full-time positions. He thought the ranges were adequate for recruitment. In regard to part-time employees, he acknowledged that the step-in-grade plan was too aggressive; in the amount and ability to get steps. He thought this new plan fixed those issues but said they would have 52 people in Recreation or Aquatics that have already, or will be maxed out. He said those employees were the ones that had been with the City the longest and had shown the most initiative and thought there could be some smaller bonus based on number of hours or some logical formula would solve his only remaining concern.

Councilmember Peterson requested a follow up conversation to discuss alternate ways that could be used to incentivize at a later discussion. Mr. Allen recommended thinking of not only how to reward certifications, but for which positions did getting a degree matter to the City. Those questions had not been resolved completely. Mr. Williams suggested that the introductory period factor in certification opportunities.

Mr. Howes said one other challenge was the facilities position. The numbers HR had shown were right where they needed to be but he could not keep the position filled. Mr. Williams said there was a way that situation could be addressed by adjusting an initial offer. Chief Bennett acknowledged his department had it easier than Public Works and Recreation because certifications were required to be a police officer. Ms. Miller thought with the new process the City could advertise what market median with certifications. Mr. Allen agreed it would be a condition of employment. Mr. Allen asked for confirmation that the general consensus was to approve the idea of putting the police officer positions on grade 10, which was one grade higher. Council agreed. Councilmember Thompson asked if the change would require a tax increase. He thought if it did, he wanted to be confident it was sustainable. Mr. Allen said Staff did not have exact numbers quite yet, but should have for the next meeting. He pointed out that there was always a gap, but if Council wanted to maintain the tax rate they could justify it with various reasons. Councilmember Thompson recognized there were other cities that needed to adjust their tax rate because they had been unable to compensate their officers. Mr. Williams indicated there was an approximate \$15k difference from Grade 9 to 10. Councilmember Wurth thought the process was a more honest way to meet the market.

Ms. Miller discussed the COLA process. Councilmember Peterson liked the 4% cap because she did not want to take a huge hit during huge inflationary years. Mayor Shepherd thought the change long-term put the City on the right path. Councilmember Ratchford thought she needed more data to evaluate the move from the step-in-grade plan because it seemed that it would have been more sustainable based on expected employee turnover. Councilmember Ratchford pointed out flaws in the execution. Mr. Williams explained the step-in-grade plan was a front-loaded salary range to attract and retain employees. Councilmember Thompson explained the history of retention issues and compression issues seen at that time. Councilmember Ratchford wanted more information to know at what point the step-in-grade plan became problematic.

Mayor Shepherd stated that in the private sector he had never seen that way of getting paid as many times as the City. He expressed confusion with the compensation policy in the past. He acknowledged that competition was different, especially with the Police Department and Public Works, as well as the public sector. Mr. Allen said the objectives of the step-in-grade were to be able to recruit more competitively and retain better, so they intentionally front-loaded the positions. Additionally, the differences from one step to the next were too aggressive which led to rapid wage growth. Ms. Williams explained there were differences in the different grades and the steps within those grades. Councilmember Ratchford asked when it was apparent it was not working. Mr. Allen said they had discussed the need for change during last year's budget meetings. He said Staff was hopeful to make small changes, but after analysis it was apparent a revamp of the process was needed. Mayor Shepherd thought the new plan put the City on a good path in the long-term.

Councilmember Ratchford asked if there would be any incentives for internal growth and retention. Councilmember Thompson pointed out it might have been too easy to reach steps. Mayor Shepherd asked if there was anything in the policy that covered a topped out employee receiving a one-time bonus. Mr. Allen said that question needed to be addressed still.

Councilmember Peterson wanted to know that there was something in the budget projections for one-time monies or certification bonuses. Councilmember Ratchford asked if there was a parameter that mandated that the certification had to be utilized. Ms. Miller said there were some situations where employees received a certificate and got the wage but then did not perform the job that the certification was required for and there was no plan for when the certification expired and the employee did not renew. She thought they could talk about each position had an individual matrix, but some of the matrices had hard stops that prevented further increases until it was done, but others did not have those hard stops.

Councilmember Ratchford thought that Staff had failed the employees and the City. She expressed remorse for the system failure where there were too many parameters left unknown. She thought there should be more parameters in place so failure did not happen again. Mr. Allen appreciated her comments, but said the primary objectives to recruit and retain was accomplished for most positions. He acknowledged that another by-product had been an incredible administrative burden. The demand on the people was extraordinary and Staff did not fully understand how complex the system was when it was created. Councilmember Ratchford expressed sadness for the system failure. Mr. Williams said no employee was completely maxed out; there were seven that were at 75%. Ms. Miller said none of the FT staff were maxed out. Councilmember Ratchford asked if there were parameters within supervisor/manager positions that specified different ranges of percentages for the different levels so there was not a cap out. Ms. Miller explained the different grades percentage differences within the grades and how the proposed plan would address the differences between managers and supervisors.

Councilmember Peterson wanted to be careful to acknowledge that coming through the pandemic there were two decisions that had shaped the current situation. One was the huge wage wars with police, and secondly, a decision by Council that the City would not leave the rest of the organization behind. She said other organizations had only addressed public safety and recognized the demands, but the Council took a wholistic approach. She further stated that this was an experiment two years ago that was internally done – driven by some intense market pressures – completely done in-house, creating a whole new system attempting to address recruitment and retention. She felt a couple years into the process, they were now evaluating what did and did not work. She appreciated a willingness to say that at the time this was the best information they had and it was out of a concern to take care of residents and those taking care of them. She did not want to belabor the issues nor see it as a failure but a chance to evaluate what was learned. She expressed the desire to now pivot and move forward together and focus energy there instead of belabor the parts that did not perform the way they wanted it to work.

Councilmember Ratchford thought it was important to look at the system. Councilmember Roper said it was a decision made as a Council and there were some serious stressors going on at the time. Councilmember Thompson explained the difficulties faced in employment at the

time. Councilmember Wurth said it was the quagmire of trying to address free-market pressures on public sector dollars when basing data-driven decisions on what other cities and similar entities were doing, and they were all guided by similar bodies with vastly different philosophies on how to compensate their employees. He commented that when we participate in so many economic sectors – we were not going to get it 100% right all the time.

Councilmember Thompson said the Council at that time knew what they were getting into, but did not know the unknowns that would come. He pointed out competing with other cities with different tax bases. He remembered getting input from Zions who ended up not getting the projections right, which was why he did not see it as a failure. Councilmember Ratchford wanted to get it right this time and put systems in place so the same problems do not happen again.

Councilmember Roper said knowing what he knew then and knowing what he knows now, he was supportive of the proposal. Councilmember Thompson said getting it right was always a work in progress, but it was about getting it right for the tax base. Councilmember Wurth saw it as preventing wild swings as the COLA would be tied to the URS calculations. Mr. Allen appreciated the discussion and said he was convinced there was no perfect compensation system and that all would have flaws. He appreciated Council's support in Staff's interest to try new things. Mr. Favero said if there was another COVID type incident, society would still go backward and no one could have predicted the high inflation that came with it. He said we had tried to make changes to be sustainable and tried to navigate some rough times and did okay. Chief Bennett, as a department head, acknowledged the enormous amount of time and work that Mr. Williams and Ms. Miller had put into the proposal.

DISCUSSION ON FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

Rich Knapp, Finance Manager, said he hoped this week or next week Staff could provide all the notes and all the analysis but this week would just be summarizing the changes they had noticed. He reviewed the anticipated future meeting schedule.

He addressed the two-year \$350k grant received by the Police Department for a Mental Health Officer and said the third year would cost \$130k. Mr. Allen gave information about seasonal vs. part-time in the Parks Department. He said the seasonal staffing had been an administrative burden. In discussions, the Staff had asked what if they did not have seasonal employees but made them part-time employees. They thought it might have a slight impact on wages in the budget but should reduce the administrative burden and reduce unemployment costs. Ms. Miller thought the budget impact would be minimal because the hourly rate would be the same. She said they were budgeting for 10/40 and had looked at the part-time staff and seasonal staff and were consistently around the 10/40 mark so it should not be much of a budget impact. She said it would ease an administrative burden. Mr. Howes said they would hire people who wanted to work the summer which would reduce unemployment significantly. Ms. Miller explained seasonal positions as it effected unemployment.

Mr. Knapp reviewed the net costs by fund for Fleet Vehicles. The need for the Vac Truck and CCT Van investment was discussed since the services were no longer being provided by any contractor. Mr. Favero said it would be cheaper in the long-run but the City would experience

some growing pains since Public Works had never worked with one. He thought the level of service would increase doing it in-house as well. He stated an additional truck might be needed at some point if the City wanted to provide a certain level of service. Mr. Knapp showed the portion that was funded through Utilities – sewer and storm funding. Mr. Knapp explained the numbers were the net cost not total cost.

Mr. Knapp reviewed the proposed replacement and fleet additions (based on the approval of new positions) to the Police vehicles. In summary, there were ten vehicles totaling \$604k with anticipated sales of \$59k, a grant in the amount of \$69k which was a net cost of \$476k.

Mr. Knapp showed the proposed replacement and additions to non-police vehicles and equipment. In summary, it was anticipated to replace vehicles in the amount of \$346k and add \$1.08M in vehicles and equipment. Mr. Howes reviewed the various vehicles and equipment and explained the anticipated increases in productivity and safety from the new equipment. Mr. Howes went into more detail explaining the trial of an Autonomous Mower on a lease basis. The Council seemed interested in owning the mower. Mr. Howes wanted to have some experience with the equipment through a lease before he committed to a purchase.

Mr. Knapp reviewed some one-time operational expenses and larger changes to the Operations Budget as outlined in the presentation material. Mr. Allen asked the Council to consider their experiences at the National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference so they could discuss at a later date whether it was worth the entire Council attending or if they would like to participate in other conferences instead. There was a discussion on the removal of the Food Trucks from the budget. Mr. Allen spoke to the administrative burden of the food trucks and the doubling of the cost. Mr. Allen said he had asked employees at the last all-employee meeting whether they would rather have the food trucks or soda machine and they wanted the soda more than the food trucks. He spoke of the need to share the responsibility for maintenance of the soda machines between the departments. He reviewed larger changes to operations in utilities.

Councilmember Peterson brought up the possibility of having the City's lobbyist, Steve Hiatt, explore any State diversion credits for unused water from Weber Basin to address the requirement to conserve water, but having to pay for water at an increased cost. She would like to discuss at a later time.

Councilmember Peterson moved to adjourn at 9:23 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Wurth.

RESULT: Passed [5 TO 0]

YES: Councilmember Thompson, Councilmember Peterson, Councilmember Roper, Councilmember Ratchford, Councilmember Wurth

NO: None

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED
This 13th day of May 2025**

/s/ Mark R. Shepherd, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder

I hereby certify that the forgoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Clearfield City Council meeting held Tuesday, March 18, 2025.

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder