

CLEARFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
6:00 PM WORK SESSION
April 08, 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, Finance Manager Rich Knapp, City Recorder Nancy Dean, Utility Superintendent Kenny England, Public Works Deputy Director Braden Felix, Finance Department Lee Naylor, Community Development Director Stacy Millgate

VISITORS: Jenna Nelson

Mayor Shepherd called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Parks Staffing Plan

Eric Howes, Community Services Director, covered the staffing challenges the department was currently experiencing. He reviewed the Management Plan during the time they were waiting to fill the open Parks Manager position. He hoped to have the position filled by the middle of May. He reviewed the terms of the lease for the autonomous mowers. He said their department was looking into contracted services for small properties like Rose Garden or Thornock Park. He spoke to the burden relieved through contracting out those services. He said they would continue encouraging Interdivision Cooperation where recreation could help Parks to manage the challenges they were facing with the staffing impacts.

Interchange Landscaping Maintenance

Mr. Howes said grass and weeds were beginning to grow so pre-emergent herbicide had been applied. He said this year there would be a lot of broad leaf weed areas while the plants and grass grew.

Pond Status Update

Mr. Howes gave a status update on Steed and Mabey Ponds. He acknowledged that the water level at Steed Pond was very low, and they would not have access to water until after April 15. He thought it would be full again by the end of April. He said Mabey Pond was full and they were adding water constantly at approximately 250 gallons/minute. He said their current problem was that both aerators at both ponds were not working. New compressors had been

installed last year, but running 24 hours a day, seven days a week was a lot of use. He said they were in the process of replacing those. He said the issue was not currently as critical at Steed Pond, but more of a problem for Mabey Pond.

Fluoridation Update

Kenny England, Water Supervisor, provided an update on the fluoridation of the County's water supply. He reported that recent legislation had banned fluoridation of the water system with the bill being effective May 7, 2025. He pointed out that Weber Basin Water was the entity that fluoridated the water the City received. He said the only water the City was responsible to fluoridate was the City wells which were not currently running. He said he had heard that it would cost about \$100k for Weber Basin Water to offload their current supply of fluoride because it was considered a hazardous material. He said the City's supply was sodium fluoride that was safer to handle. He said the City's system must have a physical disconnect submitted to the State within 30 days after May 7th. He had not yet received information from the State for that process. Councilmember Peterson asked if there were tanks that had already been fluoridated. Mr. England said there was a saturator at the pump house that needed to be discharged. He said someone from Weber Basin would come with a pump to pull out the fluoridated water. Councilmember Peterson asked if Staff would clean out the tank. Mr. England said it just needed to be pumped out and any remnants of fluoride in the system would be cleared out within two weeks.

Tasers

Kelly Bennett, Police Chief, provided information on the tasers purchased in the current budget. He said five officers had completed the certification to become instructors for the tasers. They additionally had a two-day certification for every employee in the department. He reminded the Council that it was a 5-year subscription for the tasers at \$34k per year with an initial \$10k credit for the first year. He said the subscription included cartridges, a training suite, and tracking reports on each taser. He said the program focused on de-escalation, compliance, reduction to risk or injury, and officer safety. He explained the reasons the technology was so phenomenal.

DISCUSSION ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET

Rich Knapp, Finance Manager, showed the schedule of anticipated future budget meetings.

JJ Allen, City Manager, said the objective of the presentation was to get general guidance from the Council to construct meaningful scenarios for the Council to review. The questions to be answered were about health insurance cost sharing, the funding, recruitment and equipment for a mental health officer, and thoughts on uses for CDBG monies. The other questions that would be discussed were about their thoughts on Property Tax rate and the priority of requested headcount.

Mr. Knapp asked the Council to consider how conservative it wanted Staff to be in measuring the formula for the rate of sustainability. He pointed out that the City had been successful in doing more projects and spent down balances by going a little less conservative. He said when it was more conservative Staff was conservative on revenue projections and took into

consideration the estimated three percent (3%) of unspent budget as a new feature. Mr. Knapp shared the measure of sustainability which looked at the operating revenue minus the operating expenditures. He said the estimated net ongoing negative amount of (\$595,095) would be by June 30, 2026. Mr. Allen had estimated last week that number was over (\$800K). He said it also reflected that the new positions requested were built in. As part of the information for measure of sustainability, Mr. Knapp showed a slide that showed how the operational revenue had grown compared to the operational expenses, pointing out that they did not want the expense to grow faster than the revenue.

Mr. Knapp reviewed the measure of security explaining that the measure was more project-focused. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recommendation was to have at least two months of regular general fund operating expenditures. At the current time, it was estimated that the revenue was \$3M short from the recommended \$4.2M of operating expenses or 18 days cash. Mr. Allen reassured the Council that Staff was not recommending that the budget be adopted as it currently stood. He emphasized this was just an illustration of where the budget was at that moment in time. Mr. Knapp described how the General Fund Available Balance Calculation was calculated.

Mr. Knapp reviewed the new position requests – as previously presented. Councilmember Peterson asked which compensation plan the proposed positions were based on. Mr. Allen said the amounts were based on the newer compensation model. Mr. Knapp pointed out that because they were new positions they would be at the beginning of the pay plan. Mr. Knapp stated that the natural increases to revenues usually supported the compensation increases that were planned, but were not able to pay for new positions. Mr. Allen confirmed, saying that the challenge was the new positions that were needed. Councilmember Thompson said he did not see the situation as a budget problem in light of the growth of the City. He asked if Staff had received any data from the County. Mr. Allen said no data had been entered and not anticipated until after June 7, 2025.

Chief Bennett informed the Council of anticipated implications if the new police positions were not funded – as outlined in the presentation. Councilmember Thompson said he did not have any questions and thought the requests were understated. He agreed that slippages in service in the detective division would cause problems for victims. He supported the police department's staffing request and recognized that the Legislature had created burdens for policing.

Mr. Howes presented the anticipated implications if the new positions in the Parks Department were not funded – as outlined in the presentation.

Councilmember Thompson moved to adjourn the work session and reconvene in the policy session at 6:55 p.m., seconded by Councilmember Wurth.

RESULT: Passed [5 to 0]

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

NO: None

Mayor Shepherd reconvened the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

JJ Allen, City Manager, presented potential operational cuts to the budget such as only having one Planner, reduce the budgeted amount for part-time staff, scale back on Travel and Training; designating only Council, Manager, Department Heads and Assistants, reconsider funding the Youth Commission trip to Washington, D.C., consider scale back on street maintenance and striping, cut the Economic Development Market Study, cut EDCUtah membership, reduce facility plan care, air fresheners, pest control, and reduce organizational culture amenities.

There was a discussion where Council expressed their thoughts on the proposed cuts and potential alternatives. Mr. Allen explored further strategies that could be implemented to help close the budget gap. Mayor Shepherd was not in favor of the option to phase in the new compensation plan and was concerned about the possibility of reducing employee morale. Councilmember Thompson thought the City tax increases had not matched the growth of the City so he did not think it was the time to make cuts. He would rather fund the City while they could and deal with economy when needed. He recognized there were increased needs due to the growth within the City and thought if the City did not meet that growth because of uncertainty, it would create more uncertainty. He questioned whether the answer was to make reductions now and then potentially have to propose a bigger increase a couple of years in the future. Councilmember Wurth acknowledged Councilmember Thompson's thoughts, but believed it was important to be caution so there was not a compounding effect in FY27. Councilmember Roper stated it was a time to be fiscally conservative. Councilmember Wurth did not think growth-based approach was the answer in the face of a possible recession. There was a discussion of potential impacts of a recession on spending and housing markets.

Mr. Allen informed the Council of the cost to have an external review of the compensation plan. Councilmember Peterson said she was the person who requested the review because it was the third change to the compensation policy since she had been on the Council. She spoke of the time needed to construct a compensation policy internally, and the unintended consequences to Staff afterward. She wanted to ensure that previous lessons had been learned and wanted an impartial professional third party to scrutinize it to prevent another revision to the policy in the near future. She wanted to be able to confidently speak with the residents about the compensation being paid to the employees. The Council was interested in having an outside review, but recognized the time constraints as the fiscal year would start July 1, 2025. Mr. Allen said Staff could get an outside party to look at the structure of the proposal and the validity of the data, but they would not be able to address the sustainability of the plan. Mr. Williams was concerned about the proposed outside agency not understanding the uniqueness of the City's grades when it compares it to other cities in the amount of time that would be given for the review. Councilmember Peterson pointed out that for this big of a change, having the actual numbers earlier in the year would have been helpful for the Council-level review process. Mr. Allen mentioned that without the new staff requests, these issues may not have even had to be reviewed, but because of those new requests, the compensation plan had to be reviewed to make any additional staff sustainable. Mr. Williams asked what information the Council wanted in any outside review of the compensation plan. Councilmember Peterson wanted to know: 1) if there were any unintended administrative consequences that would create burdens for Staff, 2) If the

City stayed on this compensation plan for five years was this plan industry-specific and competitive in its structure, 3) Were there any outliers across sectors that created immediate flags. She was not looking for a deep dive, but wanted it reviewed by a professional that could confirm it was sound. Mr. Allen said another possibility was to utilize TechNet who did pay plan composition analyses because they were familiar with the public sector in Utah. Ricki Miller, Human Resources Manager, said when speaking with them, she could communicate that the City was not looking for any modern approach, but a structured, sound, consistent compensation structure. The Council agreed with having TechNet review the compensation plan as a second opinion.

Mr. Allen said the City was preparing for open enrollment and the renewal rate came back at a 3% premium increase. He explained the current cost share of 90/10 was based off the cost of the traditional plan and that the cost to the City was the same whether the employee chose traditional or one of the high deductible plans. He asked Council if they wanted to keep the same cost equivalency. The Council agreed to keep the cost sharing the same.

Mr. Allen said the \$350k appropriation from the State of Utah for the Mental Health Officer was forthcoming and would pay for two years' worth of the Mental Health Officer pilot program. Mr. Allen asked whether Staff should begin recruiting for this position and place orders for the vehicle and other equipment or was there a reason to wait. Council agreed to start recruiting and place orders.

Mr. Allen said the current thought for next year's CDBG funding was to consider a home rehabilitation program through Habitat for Humanity, but in reviewing the Capital side of the budget, some of the funds could help finance some capital projects instead. Councilmember Wurth said there was a County program for home rehabilitation which had limitations that did not create the impact wanted. Council approved utilizing some of the CDBG funds toward City projects.

Mr. Allen asked Council if they were thinking of increasing the tax rate. Councilmember Ratchford said no. Councilmember Thompson had considered increasing the rate to a point that would allow the new police officer positions requested. Mayor Shepherd thought having scenarios to consider would be more helpful before answering the question.

Councilmember Peterson moved to adjourn at 9:00 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, April 08, 2025.

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder