

**NORTH OGDEN CITY COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES**

May 6, 2025

The North Ogden City Council convened on May 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at
North Ogden City Hall, 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 May 1, 2025.

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 11, 2024.

**Note: The timestamps 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.**

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Neal Berube	Mayor
Ryan Barker	Council Member
Blake Cevering	Council Member
Jay D Delpias	Council Member
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
Casey Hunsaker	City Treasurer/Emergency Manager
Katie Gerard	Human Resources Director
Scott Hess	Community And Economic Development Director
Brian Eynon	Chief of Police
Nate Boyette	Lieutenant
Bowen Koenig	Streets Supervisor
Tyrel Stark	Fleet Superintendent
Cooper Favero	Fleet Lead
Eric Casperson	City Engineer
Bryce Nelson	Administrative Services Manager
Crystal Polson	Public Works Inspector
Dylan Hill	Public Works Inspector
Jason Reney	Water Superintendent

VISITORS:

Kevin Burns
Deann Burns
Sandra Cochran
Phillip Swanson

CITY ROAD TOUR

1. ROAD CONDITION TOUR TO IDENTIFY AREAS IN THE CITY IN NEED OF REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

At 5:00 p.m., City Staff took the City Council and North Ogden City resident, Phillip Swanson, on a tour of North Ogden City's roads to identify areas in need of repair and maintenance.

See Attachment A: Driving Tour Remaining Service Life (RSL) Values

0:00:01 Mayor Berube called the meeting to order, and North Ogden City resident, Kevin Burns, offered the invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance

CONSENT AGENDA

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

0:02:06 No conflict of interest was disclosed.

3. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION TO APPROVE THE APRIL 1, 2025, AND APRIL 8, 2025, CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

0:02:10 Council Member Cevering motioned to approve the April 1, 2025, and April 8, 2025, City Council Meeting Minutes. Council Member Pulver seconded the motion.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Dalpiaz	aye
Council Member Pulver	aye
Council Member Watson	aye

The motion passed unanimously

ACTIVE AGENDA

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

0:03:35 Sandra Cochran, a North Ogden City resident, expressed disagreement with the City's decision to disable comments on the North Ogden Facebook page.

0:03:59 Deann Burns, a North Ogden City resident, shared a recent experience reporting an ordinance violation to the City. She expressed concern over the response she received, stating that the employee was unfamiliar with the ordinance and was not respectful during the interaction. Deann later confirmed the ordinance herself and followed up with the employee. She emphasized the importance of knowledgeable and respectful service from City Staff and concluded by encouraging the City to “do better,” while expressing appreciation that the issue was ultimately resolved.

5. DISCUSSION AND PREPARATION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 TENTATIVE BUDGET

0:06:29 Mayor Berube acknowledged City Manager/Attorney Jon Call for his efforts managing the Finance Director duties and noted that the newly hired Finance Director, Peter Brown, had started full-time employment, helping to alleviate some of the workload. The Mayor thanked Jon, as well as Public Works Director/Assistant City Manager, David Espinoza, for covering the Finance Director’s responsibilities during the interim.

Before beginning budget discussions, Mayor Berube introduced Phillip Swanson to provide a report on the Citizen Budget Subcommittee's recent meeting.

Phillip reported that the Committee discussed base versus usage fees in the Water Department, suggesting that the distinctions be clarified.

The transportation utility fee was also a major topic, with the Committee encouraging the Council to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of enacting the fee versus raising property taxes. Phillip noted potential legal risks from groups like Libertas challenging the legality of the fee and emphasized that if property taxes are used instead, funds might be absorbed into the general fund unless specifically earmarked for roads. The Committee recommended that the Council determine a clear policy and communicate transparently with residents about the purpose and amount of any tax or fee.

Mayor Berube added that a study to justify the fee would cost approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 and noted that taxes are deductible for itemizing taxpayers, whereas fees are not. Phillip emphasized the importance of being clear and upfront with residents and disclosed, on behalf of Committee Member Brian Bartholomew, that the City is facing an estimated \$110 million in road repair and refurbishment needs over the next decade and reiterated the need for transparency regarding this figure.

Additional topics discussed by the Committee included salary policy, specifically whether to maintain the current policy of paying at the 50th percentile of market pay and its financial implications, as well as a review of employee benefits.

The possibility of implementing a transient room tax on short-term rentals such as VRBOs was raised, though it would generate limited revenue.

Finally, the Committee recommended a thorough review of all potential taxes and fees that the City could legally and appropriately charge. Phillip concluded by noting that recent economic indicators suggest consumer pullback and potential impacts on sales tax revenue.

a. Transportation Utility Fee

0:17:35 The discussion began with an overview of the current transportation fee and its historical context. Since the first implementation of the fee in 2011, adjustments have been made, including a significant increase in 2016 to fund capital projects. Despite these increases, it was agreed that the current fee remains insufficient to meet the growing demands on the City's street infrastructure.

City Manager/Attorney Jon Call highlighted that while the fee has supported necessary projects, rising costs due to inflation and increased development have outpaced revenues. Concerns were raised about maintaining long-term sustainability, especially with major projects on the horizon.

Bowen Koenig, Streets Supervisor, provided a detailed update on the condition of City streets. He reported that approximately 75% of roads in the City fall within a rating of zero to six years of remaining service life (RSL), indicating roads that are considered to be in poor to critical condition.

Bowen explained that roads with an RSL of zero to four years nearly always require a complete rebuild at a significant cost. Roads with an RSL of four to eight years can often still be saved with less costly treatments, such as chip seal, which helps extend their service life by an additional 8 to 10 years. Prioritizing funding toward chip seal treatments for roads in the four to eight-year RSL range was recommended, suggesting that approximately 50% of the available funds be used to preserve these roads. The remaining funds should be split between rebuilding critical roads and maintaining those in better condition to avoid further deterioration.

Mayor Berube emphasized that deferring road repairs only increases long-term costs, citing skyrocketing asphalt prices. He also pointed out that without proactive measures, the City will continually fall further behind on maintenance, even if modest funding increases are implemented.

Council members debated whether to address the funding gap through an increase in the transportation utility fee or a property tax adjustment. Suggestions were made to raise the fee by \$10 to \$15 per month; however, several Council members recognized that this alone would not address the backlog of needs. It was suggested that a bond of \$50 to \$90 million could be pursued to tackle a substantial portion of the backlog in one effort, though concerns were raised about the political feasibility of passing a bond. The use of a FlashVote survey was suggested to gather input from residents, including responses on funding preferences, fee vs. tax or bonding options, and gauging expectations about road conditions. It was reiterated that while full-scale rehabilitation is ideal, even partial funding can make a significant difference in preserving roads before they fall into total failure. 50% of funds should go toward roads with four to eight years of life, 25% toward critical rebuilds, and the remaining 25% on maintaining roads in relatively good condition.

In conclusion, the Council agreed that further analysis is needed to determine an appropriate approach to road maintenance funding, including potential fee adjustments, bond opportunities, and further community input.

b. Salary Study

1:24:32 The Council held an in-depth discussion regarding the City's salary policy and proposed adjustments to compensation and retirement benefits. City Manager/Attorney Jon Call began by outlining the current salary study methodology and compensation policy, which targets employee pay at the 50th percentile of market data, allowing for a 10% range above or below that average. However, many employees are still being paid below that range, and a significant number are below the City's targeted compensation levels. For example, employees who have held a position for several years are still below the 100% market target despite gaining experience, which the policy intends to reward.

Jon emphasized that the salary data, while generally reliable, is not without flaws. Some Cities only report one individual per job category, skewing the average, and data entry errors occasionally occur. Nevertheless, he expressed confidence in the overall validity of the system. Council members discussed whether the current goal, being at 100% of market value over a set number of years, is still appropriate and whether to maintain the existing 10% cap on annual salary increases. This year's estimated cost to bring all employees within the desired range is about \$500,000, including associated benefits.

The Council also discussed the City's 401(k) match policy. Currently, employees receive a 3% automatic contribution from the City, with an additional 3% match if they contribute 3%, totaling 9%. The proposed adjustment would shift to a 4% match only if the employee contributes 4%, removing the automatic contribution. This would save the City an estimated \$50,000 - \$60,000 annually and free up funds to support salary increases. There was discussion about fairness and the impact on lower-paid employees who may not be able to contribute to their retirement.

Mayor Berube stressed the importance of valuing employees as the City's most important asset, noting that skilled staff are essential to delivering services and maintaining institutional knowledge. Several Council members echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the need to retain trained employees and the high cost of turnover. They supported continuing to invest in competitive salaries and total compensation packages, which include wages, retirement, and health benefits.

Council members debated whether mid-year adjustments should be allowed and reaffirmed their previous decision to avoid them in favor of an annual market review process. They also discussed the total compensation philosophy, including merit-based pay increases, cost-of-living adjustments, and professional development pathways for advancement.

A consensus emerged to support the proposed salary plan, which includes a minimum 3% increase and a 10% cap for those catching up to the target. The Council also generally agreed on the proposed changes to the 401(k) policy, recognizing the need for long-term fiscal responsibility while still maintaining competitive benefits. It was acknowledged that while the change reduces automatic benefits, it encourages employee participation in their retirement planning.

The discussion concluded with reaffirmation of the City's commitment to competitive compensation, an acknowledgment of the progress made in employee pay and retention over recent years, and an emphasis on the need for continued balancing of fiscal constraints with the City's duty to attract and retain high-quality staff. The Council directed Staff to return with a finalized compensation proposal based on the discussed policy direction.

c. Property Tax

2:00:14 City Manager/Attorney Jon Call opened a discussion on property tax strategy, focusing on whether the City should raise taxes only as needed or adopt a policy of small, consistent increases. He noted the discussion was related to the transportation utility fee topic but warranted its own consideration. Council Member Cevering expressed continued support for small annual increases to keep up with inflation, stating it was a responsible approach for long-term planning. Council Member Pulver expressed concern about setting arbitrary percentages and suggested that tax increases should be tied to measurable needs, such as public safety wage growth. He emphasized the financial burden even small increases can have on some residents, such as fixed-income households, but acknowledged that failing to increase revenues forces the City to cut services or deplete reserves.

Mayor Berube proposed a potential policy requiring the City to hold a truth-in-taxation hearing every year, even if the resulting increase was zero. He argued that such a policy would promote transparency and accountability, while allowing the City to regularly communicate financial needs. He used projected salary and benefit cost increases as an example of why consistent revenue adjustments are necessary.

Council Member Pulver supported the idea, adding that economic diversification efforts, especially through commercial development, would help reduce reliance on property taxes in the future. Council Member Watson commented that while consistent small increases had been discussed for years, the recent proposed 40% increase for road funding made that approach seem inconsistent.

Council Member Dalpiaz expressed concern that future Councils could reverse a consistent policy for political reasons and warned against short-term popularity at the expense of long-term needs. He supported the idea of annual truth in taxation hearings as a formal ordinance and saw it as a way to keep the public informed while protecting critical services. He acknowledged the personal burden of rising taxes but emphasized the necessity of addressing the City's many unmet needs.

Mayor Berube agreed and reiterated that such hearings offer a chance to explain the budget to residents.

The discussion concluded with general support for an ordinance or policy to formalize the City's approach to annual tax review and communication with the public. Mayor Berube referenced South Ogden as a model where citizens have come to expect annual hearings, and participation has decreased over time as trust in the process has grown.

d. Utility Rates

[2:10:25](#) City Manager/Attorney Jon Call outlined the components of the recommended increases. The water utility rate increase totals \$1.64 per month, which includes 85 cents dedicated to planning for future capital projects such as a major water meter replacement expected in the next three to five years, and 79 cents to cover operational costs, including rising expenses for chlorine and staff salaries. The solid waste rate increase is entirely a pass-through to residents, resulting from a rate hike at the Weber County Transfer Station and a 4% increase from the City's contracted hauling company. This increase reflects external cost adjustments and not internal budget decisions. The City plans to go out to bid for a new waste hauling contract next year as part of the upcoming budget process.

Mayor Berube raised a concern about the City's growing reliance on interest income in enterprise funds. He cautioned against using this revenue source to cover ongoing operational expenses, as it may not be sustainable. Jon acknowledged the point and committed to discussing it further with both outgoing Finance Director Jami Jones and incoming Finance Director Peter Brown to ensure future budget planning remains stable and conservative.

In terms of other utilities, the sewer rate will not increase this year due to a healthy fund balance, which is sufficient to meet capital needs and maintain the City's five-year plan.

In contrast, the stormwater utility requires a \$2 per month increase. In recent years, the City has used fund balance to avoid increasing rates, but with that balance now at a responsible minimum level, it is no longer viable to delay a rate adjustment. The increase will support compliance with new State mandates and cover increased staffing and operating costs.

The total recommended increase across all utility services is \$5.42 per month, or approximately \$65 per year per household.

e. User Fees and Fee Schedule

[2:14:25](#) City Manager/Attorney Jon Call began by acknowledging that the Citizens Budget Subcommittee and various Staff members have been analyzing potential areas where user fees could be adjusted to better cover the actual cost of services. He emphasized that while some departments, like Building, Water, Sewer, and Stormwater, are mostly self-funded through fees, others, such as Planning, are not expected to be fully self-funded due to their service-oriented nature to residents, including duties mandated by State law.

The conversation shifted to the Aquatic Center, which continues to operate at a deficit despite a \$2 increase to the gate fee last year.

That increase generated approximately \$80,000 in additional revenue, but the gain was offset by increased costs for chlorine and other operational needs.

Jon recommended increasing the gate fee again this year and presented two options: a smaller, stepwise increase or a more immediate adjustment to the previously recommended rate of \$11.50. Council members expressed a preference for a modest, incremental increase, suggesting options such as 50 cents or \$1 to avoid deterring attendance. Ultimately, there was general agreement on setting the new gate rate at \$9.50 with tax included.

The discussion also addressed the prior removal of a resident discount, which had been difficult to administer. The Council acknowledged that under the philosophy of having users cover actual costs, the rate should be the same for residents and non-residents. Council members also explored whether additional revenues could be generated through the pool's concessions. Currently outsourced, concessions return only 10–15% to the City. Justin, the Aquatic Center manager, expressed interest in taking over concession operations in the future, contingent on staffing and startup support. He believes doing so could significantly increase revenue and better justify the pool's costs. Council members were supportive of exploring this idea in the next year.

There was also discussion about possibly opening the pool for private party reservations on Sundays. Justin is evaluating this option, but noted that current staffing levels and seasonal hiring practices do not support Sunday operations for the current year. Council encouraged building that expectation into next year's hiring. Additional ideas included reserving tables at the pool for a fee to prevent early claim-and-leave behavior by patrons. This and similar small revenue-generating ideas reflect a broader push for department heads to examine how to recover more costs where possible without broadly increasing fees on all residents. Mayor Berube and the Council emphasized that any pool revenue currently only covers operations and not long-term maintenance or capital needs.

The discussion concluded with general agreement on the \$9.50 gate fee and support for staff to bring forward a formal fee schedule.

f. Rainy Day Fund

[2:38:36](#) The Council held a philosophical discussion on the purpose, use, and management of the City's rainy day (general fund balance) and capital reserve funds. City Manager/Attorney Jon Call initiated the conversation by asking Council members to consider the principles that should guide when and how these funds are used.

He clarified that while the current general fund balance is projected to end the fiscal year at 25%, the maximum allowed by State law is 35%, and the internal City floor is 15%, there is no immediate decision required, but he encouraged the Council to start shaping a long-term strategy.

Council Member Barker and others noted that rainy day funds should be used for significant unplanned expenses that arise mid-year and cannot be delayed, such as emergency repairs from floods or critical infrastructure failures. Mayor Berube emphasized that these funds should not be used to simply balance the budget or cover routine operational shortfalls. He suggested that a clearer policy could help prevent misuse and ensure the funds are preserved for true emergencies.

Council members discussed the idea of establishing defined thresholds or triggers for when rainy day funds should be used. Jon supported this approach and suggested that the City could formally adopt a strategic plan that outlines these policies, including a possible tiered model where 15% of the fund balance is untouchable, and the remaining 10% could be allocated for specific, pre-defined circumstances. He also explained that once an emergency exceeds \$1 million, it can trigger State and Federal reimbursement processes, and the current fund levels should be sufficient to float such costs temporarily.

The conversation also touched on how to manage property tax growth. Mayor Berube suggested not relying on that growth for operational costs but instead saving it to fund future public safety staffing needs without requiring additional tax increases.

The discussion turned briefly to the capital projects fund, which has a separate \$1 million balance not currently programmed for expenditure. This is seen as a capital rainy day fund that could be used for opportunities like land acquisition or unplanned infrastructure investments. It was noted that interfund loans are another option for financial flexibility if needed, although they require a formal process.

Council Member Dalpiaz and others voiced general support for maintaining a 15% minimum fund balance in the general fund, aiming for a stable target closer to 25%.

g. Capital Expenditures

[2:50:31](#) City Manager/Attorney Jon Call opened the topic by stating that since the current budget does not include a transfer into capital projects, it also excludes projects like the McGriff Park bathroom installation, which is estimated at \$300,000. He emphasized the principle that if the City is not saving money in its capital improvement fund (CIP), it should not be spending from it. However, he acknowledged exceptions where delaying a project could increase future costs, though he did not consider the bathroom project as falling into that category.

Mayor Berube responded that deferring capital projects creates a funding challenge for future years, noting that if \$300,000 is not saved this year, it will need to be doubled next year to catch up. He expressed concern about lacking a long-term financing plan, particularly for larger projects like Barker Park, which has an estimated \$15 - 20 million cost. He also questioned the feasibility of spending \$200,000 on park design fees without a clear plan for funding construction.

Jon explained that the design fees could be paid using park impact fees, which are collected from new development. He estimated that the next 40 homes built could generate enough impact fees to cover the design cost and said that future phases of the park could be funded incrementally as more homes are built. Council members discussed the practicality of building Barker Park in phases, focusing on core components such as a parking lot or a soccer field first.

Mayor Berube and Council Member Pulver both voiced concerns about setting a precedent of not contributing to CIP, warning it could become a pattern. The risk of a “slippery slope” was emphasized where skipping annual contributions becomes the norm, setting the City up for long-term failure in capital planning. Council Member Pulver added that while CIP is critical, immediate infrastructure needs like road maintenance may take priority, especially when the City faces multiple competing financial demands.

The Council also discussed leveraging grants, donations, and private fundraising for projects, noting other cities’ success with community-supported projects. Jon highlighted that some residents may be willing to donate funds or services if asked, and such outreach could help reduce reliance on taxes for capital projects.

Council Member Pulver raised concerns about transparency and consistency, citing a previous commitment to allocate \$100,000 annually to sidewalks that appears to have vanished from the current budget. Jon agreed to investigate and provide clarification. Council members agreed that even if reduced, consistent annual contributions to the capital fund are important to avoid pushing all infrastructure needs into future years and risking cost escalations.

h. Community Service Officer

3:03:53 City Manager/Attorney Jon Call initiated a discussion on potentially adding a third CSO (Community Service Officer), emphasizing its strategic importance in reducing the burden on police officers and fulfilling the City’s goals. He suggested revisiting the decision in December based on October financials and indicated the CSO position and CIP funding should be prioritized if revenues improve. Chief Eynon supported the request, noting that current CSOs are stretched thin and handling duties such as code enforcement, evidence management, animal control, front desk tasks, vacation checks, and more. Chief Eynon argued that adding a third CSO would

allow for specialization, better service, and cost savings compared to adding a sworn officer. Council members expressed general support for the need but had varying views on timing, with some suggesting the position could be added in the next fiscal year and others advocating for a mid-year hire to avoid further delays.

Concerns about economic uncertainty and budget impacts were raised, and there was discussion around funding options, including the relation to the potential road fund and tax changes. Council Member Barker emphasized the importance of acting rather than deferring again, and the possibility of hiring in January was mentioned as a compromise.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

3:14:22 Kevin Burns, a North Ogden City resident, commented on several issues. He expressed strong opposition to labeling the proposed transportation fee as anything other than a tax, emphasizing that if residents cannot opt out, it is effectively a tax. He questioned the use of ordinances to restrict property tax usage solely to public safety, suggesting that ordinances can be changed if needed.

Kevin also encouraged City leadership to support employee participation in retirement programs like 401(k)s and praised the value of early retirement planning, referencing his own experience.

Regarding City amenities, he suggested the City consider opening the Aquatic Center on Sundays during the more weather-predictable months of July and August as a test. He concluded by acknowledging that Council members would face unpopularity in making tough budget decisions, urging them to accept that responsibility and focus on the serious governance tasks at hand.

3:18:07 Phillip Swanson, a North Ogden City resident, cautioned the Council against budgeting based on unrealistic expectations or potential grant money that hasn't been secured, likening it to planning life around winning the lottery. He emphasized the need to focus City budgeting on essential services and avoid spending on non-necessities. Phillip criticized the City's historical pattern of deferring maintenance and avoiding small, regular property tax increases, which he believes has led to current financial challenges. He also noted that modest increases in service fees, like at the Aquatic Center, fail to keep pace with inflation.

In response to the Mayor's question, Phillip confirmed he had received feedback from some Citizen Budget Subcommittee members on what items may be considered non-

essential and agreed to forward that input for further review, clarifying that prioritizing within essentials is often a matter of degrees rather than strict categories.

7. MAYOR/COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS

3:22:42 City Manager/Attorney Jon Call explained that legally, the City can disable comments on its official Facebook page as long as all comments are turned off equally, not selectively, to avoid First Amendment violations. The decision was made due to increasing trolling, personal attacks on employees, and unproductive negativity. While some comments are benign or helpful, much of the interaction has become hostile, and the effort to monitor and moderate it 24/7 is burdensome.

Council Member Dalpiaz disagreed with the decision and requested further discussion in a future meeting. He emphasized that many residents value the ability to comment and feel heard, and he finds citizen feedback useful, even if he doesn't respond. He pointed out that City officials should follow legal guidelines (like not deleting individual comments) rather than silencing feedback altogether.

Mayor Berube added that while he supports transparency and public discourse, expectations must be clear: the City will not respond to comments. He noted that engaging with trolls often escalates the situation and suggested residents use other channels if they seek formal responses.

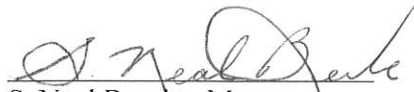
Human Resources Director Katie Gerard, who runs the City's Facebook page, defended the decision, citing frequent attacks on employees that harm morale. She stated that while the page was meant for sharing helpful information, it has devolved into a platform for insults and inappropriate comments, which she found damaging to staff well-being. The Council agreed to revisit the issue in a future meeting to determine whether to allow comments and under what guidelines.

3:32:30 Council Member Barker acknowledged that many City employees watch City Council meetings, often via YouTube, and expressed appreciation for their engagement. He noted it's encouraging to see their names appear during the Zoom broadcast, showing they're paying attention to City decisions and discussions.

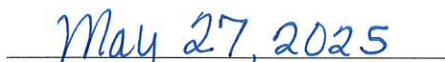
8. ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Watson motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.


S. Neal Berube, Mayor


Joyce Pierson
Deputy City Recorder


Date Approved