

CLEARFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
8:00 AM WORK RETREAT SESSION  
August 01, 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

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Assistant City Manager Spencer Brimley, Community Services Director Eric Howes, City Attorney Stuart Williams, Police Chief Kelly Bennett, City Manager JJ Allen, 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, Finance Department Lee Naylor, Assistant Police Chief Devin Rogers, Assistant City Attorney Amy Jones, Lieutenant Scott Manookin, Planner Tyson Stoddard, Community Development Director Stacy Millgate

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – PHILOSOPHIES & SOLUTIONS**

Shaundra Rushton, Communications Manager, spoke about the different ways the City worked to engage the community and the tools used. There was a discussion of ways the City could expand its service levels and engagement by creating a centralized place for residents to locate all City information and a suggestion to use an AI ChatBox to assist visitors to the website. JJ Allen, City Manager, said he had received feedback from other City Managers who had a city app saying the app did not replace their social media or other forms of communication, but was another thing to manage.

### **CLEARFIELD STATION – UPDATE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

Ryan Thomas – Stack Real Estate, Ken Shields – Hamilton Partners, Jesse Arnold – Hamilton Partners, and Damon Burnham – Development Manager for UTA joined the work retreat to discuss the status of the Clearfield Station development.

Mr. Shields said they were in the process of designing the first phase of apartments. They had sold two parcels to “The Front Climbing Club” who were in the process of designing the gym and a restaurant parcel. Mr. Shields showed the first rendering of the apartment complex, which would include a retail area. He said building D would have a fitness center and dog park and the leasing offices. He said that they were working with the City on Code issues. He reported that

they had a difficult time finding a financial partner given the current economic climate. They were looking at a \$22M investment and that part of the project had been slow due to high interest rates, tariffs, and a reduction in rents.

Councilmember Wurth asked why they did not design more levels in the apartment buildings. Mr. Shields explained that the first phase were the two smallest lots, and it was more difficult to go higher on those blocks because it was a podium project. He said they had opted for the tuck under parking to ensure they were hitting the amenities that the residents wanted up here. He said their philosophy was to build projects that had more amenities and nicer finishes. He said there was the potential of going with larger buildings in future phases, but they wanted to get the first project off the ground. Mr. Thomas said in a typical podium project they were typically \$60k – \$80k per unit more cost depending on parking ratios just to get the structured parking. He said they needed to prove the concept from an investor perspective. Mr. Arnold said it was an effort to keep costs down so rents could stay at a digestible level. They did not want to outkick their coverage and eliminate the potential client pool.

Councilmember Ratchford asked what they anticipated the rents would be. Mr. Arnold said their target was approximately \$2/square foot. They were trying to keep it around \$1600 for a one bedroom apartment. He said there was a unique unit mix that included a smaller studio starting at about \$1200. Additionally, they had five-3 bedroom units.

Mayor Shepherd asked about the decision to share amenities between buildings. Mr. Arnold explained that part of the reason tenants might choose these units was to have exclusive access to the amenities. He said it was a unique concept, but they could consider sharing in future phases, but at the same time it boiled down to security and exclusivity.

Mayor Shepherd pointed out that office space was tough in the current market. He asked if office did not work then what was their plan and how long did they wait on the commercial piece. Mr. Thomas said they were starting to see demand come back but the challenge with doing new office were the higher lease rates from the past. He said long-term, they still believed in office space, but the market would have to revert to a new equilibrium. He said they were open to looking at alternatives if it made sense for the project, the residents and Clearfield City as a whole. He said they hated selling the project down the river for a short term solution. He said they understood the challenges to the City with the bond – but they wanted to make sure it was done right. Mr. Allen explained that the City felt a great amount of pressure because they did not have the source of revenue to cover the bond payments and they needed the tax increment to start kicking in. He said the City should be okay for a couple of years, it might be tight years, but he would hate to settle for something that, in the long-term, they would regret.

Councilmember Thompson asked what regional economic factors were causing the slowing of the market and finding an investor. Mr. Arnold said the residential/multi-family market leading up to the pandemic saw low interest rates, and higher availability of capital so projects got started faster than the markets could absorb. He said a five year average was about 3k units of absorption in Davis County, but they saw 5k units come online. The absorption of those units resulted in new projects taking longer to get occupied. He said that the slowdown increased vacancies project-wide and there was less competitive availability. Supply did not meet demand

but there was a 40-year high in supply. He said a lot of developers identified the issue as a housing shortage. When a ton of supply was coming in, it took time to absorb. He said there was also a pattern of costs exceeding rent revenue growth that was expected, which threw off the equation. He said there was a belief that a lack of new starts would allow rent growth to increase. He said the operating costs had increased and the operating margin had shrunk the last 5 years post-Covid.

Councilmember Wurth said there had been legislative momentum to develop condos instead of apartments. He asked what consideration was being given to providing ownership units. Mr. Shields said they had considered the townhome village as a potential condo project but had not looked too closely at condos for any of the apartment buildings, but could take a closer look at it. Councilmember Wurth said there were many that wanted to purchase condos due to the lack of available land. He wanted more thoughts to consider how they could get product out of the ground, impact home-ownership rates and make them attainable to people which would be most beneficial to the community.

Mayor Shepherd thought the changes the legislature made recently would make condo projects in the area beneficial. Mr. Shields said with the lack of available land along the Wasatch Front they had to learn how to build vertically. Mayor Shepherd thought an owner/rental mix at the Station would be beneficial. Councilmember Ratchford asked if they had considered any incentives to bring people into the market. Mr. Shields said the retail component needed to wait to have people living in the development. He thought once the apartments came in and the Front got built, it would be attractive for retailers. He said they were not marketing the retail as hard as they were marketing the investors for the apartments and office.

Councilmember Thompson asked if there was a rise in delinquency rates in the multi-family financing in the region. Mr. Arnold explained challenges developers had faced over the last two years but thought things on the operating side were coming back and thought the market was still relatively healthy. He thought the mid- to long-term fundamentals were there, but it was the short-term supply and issues with the bank financing debt piece the last few years that had caused heartburn which influenced the equity side as well. Mr. Thomas pointed out that Utah was known as a very conservative market in taking on debt, which had helped insulate Utah's economy from the national issues.

Councilmember Peterson asked if they were talking timelines for shovels in the ground. Mr. Shields said they could not promise a timeline due to all the factors involved. He thought the time was coming for the flood gates to open and see construction open again. She asked Staff whether there was an expectation for building either the Front or the housing or any timing triggers. Mr. Allen said the tie in the development agreement was that the developers could not do anything beyond the residential buildings until the Front and something else was under construction.

Councilmember Thompson asked if the Council could explore any deregulation in the development agreement to help them get started. Councilmember Peterson did not recommend changing the development agreement. Damon Burnham, UTA, did not think the development agreement was an impediment. He said UTA had talked internally about whether there were

things UTA could do, understanding with regulatory issues there were always costs, so not a lot there. He said UTA had narrowed it down to it being a financial issue and all parties were waiting for things to turnaround. He did not think there were City impediments.

Councilmember Thompson asked whether there was any federal money for transportation projects. Mr. Burnham said he would have to check but not usually. He said usually FTA money was focused on infrastructure. Mr. Arnold said they had explored many options and had been trying to get creative in sourcing.

Councilmember Wurth asked if they had explored a Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) piece to help fill out the capital stack. Mr. Shields said Mayor Shepherd had a meeting set up with Lotus to discuss that option. Mr. Arnold said they did not have experience with LIHTC products, but they wanted to understand Lotus' experience with that product type. Mr. Thomas said there was a very competitive process with tax credits. Mr. Shields thought they could get the project going easily if they cut out all the amenities, but they have found that holding out makes for a much nicer community and they did not want to cut corners.

Spencer Brimley, Assistant City Manager & Economic Development Director, said the City sometimes felt like a regulatory agency and not a partner and asked that the City be made part of the discussions. He said the City wanted to be a support and not an impediment. Mr. Arnold said they wanted to make an impact on communities, and not cutting corners was a part of that. He said they understood it was a collective team effort that required a long-term approach to this development. He thought their approach needed to be pragmatic. He said they were willing to integrate the City in conversations. Councilmember Peterson mentioned there was so much animosity nationally between cities and developers, but it was helpful to understand their challenges. Mr. Burnham said he had worked for Ogden City when Clearfield started the project. He thought Clearfield City was being visionary, but thought the City made the right decision and thought they would get there.

Break taken at 9:45 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

The group participated in a Team Activity.

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT / MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER**

Kelly Bennett, Police Chief, discussed current recruitment efforts and the department's approach in interviewing, testing and assessing applicants. He reviewed the requirements of Police Officer Field Training. He anticipated the new officers being assigned to a crew April 2026. He identified equipment, number of field trainers, and other staffing concerns as obstacles. Chief Bennett reviewed the process for promotions and backfill of positions.

Chief Bennett defined the roles and responsibilities of the new Mental Health Officer. He anticipated an internal selection in September. Mr. Allen thought the City should publicize the incorporation of a mental health officer. There was a discussion on the strategies involved in

mental health incidents to lessen the perceived threat to the individual.

Councilmember Ratchford was concerned about burnout for this type of assignment. Chief Bennett explained that there was a 4-year rotation plan for special assignments, but each officer underwent a bi-annual therapy check-in. He informed the Council that if officers needed additional check-ins, it was part of the program. Devin Rogers, Assistant Police Chief, said the check-ins were quarterly for special assignments. Councilmember Wurth was impressed with their efforts in going after the program which reflected their commitment to community and people and hoped this type of policing could be expanded in the future. Councilmember Peterson thought the position reflected a greater commitment to improving policing methods. Chief Bennett said they had prioritized community policing and had made some significant changes. He said this position would go into the Administrative Services division like the VAWA Investigator and two other school resource officers. This position would help with various community events.

## **CHANGES SINCE TENTATIVE BUDGET**

Rich Knapp, Finance Manager, reviewed some changes to the FY26 Budget and items that would be rolled over from FY25 Budget to the FY26 Budget. He anticipated additional changes prior to the adoption of the Final Budget on August 26, 2025.

Mr. Knapp provided possible explanations from the Utah State Tax Commission for why the tax rate increased even though property values went up. He showed graphics which compared historical property tax money and property tax rates by entity.

Adam Favero, Public Works Director, reviewed the costs for the recent repairs to the water system. He thought it was currently about \$100k with VFD and the well at 700 South. For the recent waterline repair on State Street, he anticipated double that amount, but had not looked at the small booster yet. They were trying to upsize the booster. He estimated \$40-\$50k. He said the costs were unknown for the labor to pull the pump. He did not anticipate the pump being in service this year. He would need to decide how to shift the budget around. Mr. Allen said if they had good data before the budget adoption these numbers would be included in the final budget.

Break was taken at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting reconvened at 11:11 a.m.

## **NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP IN CHANGING TIMES**

Brad Mortensen – President, Weber State University, spoke with the group about his experience finding a career despite personal limitations and what qualities had allowed him to successfully collaborate to find solutions.

Lunch break was taken at 12:15 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 12:55 p.m.

Team Activity

## **ROTATING DEPARTMENT ROUNDTABLES**

Break was taken at 2:50 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:10 p.m.

## **UNDERSTANDING CLEARFIELD'S WATER SYSTEM**

Adam Favero, Adaon Fish reviewed various elements of the components, sources, infrastructure, operations, and quality of the City's water system.

There was a discussion on the future need for an additional storage tank. Mr. Favero said the current storage tanks were okay for several more years with the current growth rate but said it would need to be addressed in the next 10-15 years. Mayor Shepherd wondered what parameters were used to determine when another storage tank would be needed. Mr. Favero said it was a calculation that considered 4-5 different parameters. Mayor Shepherd wanted to know when it was needed so it could be made part of planning for the future. Mr. Allen brought up the fact that impact fees needed to be spent within six years. Mr. Favero said Weber Basin was contemplating reducing the individual gallons per day number. He thought if they reduced that then it would buy more time for the storage but there were still a lot of unknowns.

Councilmember Peterson asked if it had been contemplated to limit the percentage of impact fees for future projects like an enterprise fund. Mr. Allen explained the cost of infrastructure was built into the impact fee calculation so the City would presumably have to bond first to be able to use impact fees.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.**

**APPROVED AND ADOPTED  
This 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 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 Friday, August 01, 2025.

/s/ Nancy R. Dean, City Recorder