



Willard City Council Meeting
August 6, 2025
Willard City Council Room: 6:30 p.m.
Truth & Taxation Meeting

Officials Present:

Mayor Travis Mote
Council Member Jacob Bodily
Council Member Rod Mund
Council Member Mike Braegger
Council Member Rex Christensen
Council Member Jordan Hulse
Madison Brown, Planner
Susan O'Bray, City Recorder

Others Present:

Doug Younger	Jay Thackeray
John Simmons	Amy Nielson
Evan Ciccinielli	Chris Engelbrecht
Judy Loveland	Diana Mund
Jen Johnson	Van Mund
Jean Loveland	Gaye Moniaque
Ken Ormond	Duane Roper
Ruth Ormond	Ryan Child
Steven Biemer	Chris Engelbrecht
	Diana Mund

Invocation

Mayor Mote led the invocation.

Pledge

Councilmember Bodily led the Pledge of Allegiance.

6:30 p.m. Public Hearing: Truth in Taxation proposed tax increase.

Mayor Mote opened the discussion by explaining that the only item on the agenda was the public hearing for the truth in taxation proposal. He outlined the details of the proposed increase:

- The tax on a \$515,000 residence (the average residence value in the city) would increase from \$271.35 to \$394.85, which is a \$123.50 increase per year.
- The tax on \$515,000 business would increase from \$493.37 to \$717.91, which is \$224.54 per year.
- If approved, Willard City would receive an additional \$130,999 in property tax revenue per year.
- This represents a 45.15% increase from last year's property tax revenue.

Mayor Mote provided context for the proposed tax increase, noting that the city council had been reviewing the budget since April and had already made cuts in several areas, including public works personnel, operating machinery costs, and vehicle purchases. He explained that the city has growing needs, including a future ambulance for the city, maintaining police coverage as the city grows, and increased costs for parks and roads maintenance from new subdivisions.

Motion to open the public hearing made by Council Member Braegger, seconded by Council Member Bodily. All voted in favor.

Evan Cicchinelli (833 South 260 East) expressed concern about the 45% tax increase occurring at a time when property values had decreased by approximately \$3,000. He calculated this would raise his property taxes by about 28% overall and questioned what value residents would receive for this increase.

Mayor Mote explained how property taxes work, noting that as property values increase or decrease, the levy rate adjusts to keep city revenue stable with only slight increases for new construction. He clarified that the biggest costs to the city are salaries, which affect all departments from water and sewer to parks, roads, and emergency services. He emphasized that maintaining competitive salaries helps prevent costly staff turnover. The mayor further explained that the city needs additional police coverage as it expands, noting they are below the recommended officer-to-population ratio, and the current proposal would bring them to 5 officers, still short of their goal of 7.

Steven Beimer (860 Center Street) asked why the city does not send out a detailed breakdown of how the tax increase would be spent. He also raised

concerns about water infrastructure for new developments, questioning who would be responsible for wells if they fail after annexation. Mayor Mote explained that impact fees can only be used for specific infrastructure upgrades and not for maintenance or operations. Mr. Beamer also complained about garbage service damaging cans, and Mayor Mote encouraged residents to report such issues to the city.

Chris Engelbrecht (256 East 825 South) asked for clarification on how population growth affects revenue. City Accountant Ryan Child explained that property taxes represent \$305,000 of the city's \$2.2 million general fund budget, and population growth brings in additional sales tax revenue but does not automatically increase property tax revenue due to state laws. Ryan also clarified that the proposed tax increase is specifically to fund a new police officer position (\$60,000 in wages, \$30,000 in benefits, and \$14,000 in supplies and training) and that water and sewer funds are separate from property taxes.

Gaye Moniasque (65 South 100 East) expressed concern about the impact on retired residents living on fixed incomes. She noted that the city had previously stated it could absorb costs without tax increases and now was proposing a significant increase. She worried about future costs for the ambulance service, questioned the need for an additional police officer, and suggested cross-training existing staff. She also expressed concerns about pending increases to sewer, water, and garbage rates, stating that these combined increases were becoming unaffordable.

Jan Johnson (71 East 100 North) questioned why fire hydrants with bags over them had not been repaired for over a year, expressing concern that this could affect insurance rates and fire protection. Council members acknowledged this issue and indicated they would address it.

Amy Neilson (135 South Main Street) inquired about ambulance service options, asking if the city could work with other nearby cities besides Brigham City. Council Member Bodily explained that other districts like North Ogden are busy with their own areas and do not want to extend coverage. He detailed the ambulance planning process, noting that they had been working on this since Brigham City indicated they would end service. He explained the costs involved with staffing an ambulance and that they have been developing a budget that includes potentially refurbished equipment to save costs.

Jay Thackeray (1562 North Hargis Hill Road) suggested the city should focus funding on the fire department for ambulance service rather than adding police officers. He questioned whether police coverage was necessary given the city's low crime rate. He expressed concern about rising utility rates while service quality declines and suggested the city should be more developer-friendly to increase tax revenue through growth. He recommended considering a smaller tax increase of 15% instead of 45%.

Chris Engelbrecht and Evan Chickenelli returned to discuss an issue with a 12-inch secondary water line that was installed in 2016 but is not properly documented or buried. They expressed concern about potential flooding if the line breaks. Mayor Mote indicated they would investigate this issue separately.

Jean Loveland (105 South 100 East) spoke in support of the tax increase, suggesting that the low crime rate might be due to the effectiveness of current police officers. She recommended the council reevaluate some expenditures approved of last year.

Judy Loveland suggested implementing an impact fee for police service in South Willard. Mayor Mote explained they were working with the county on a "rooftop fee" arrangement to ensure proportional cost sharing based on the number of residences served.

Duane Roper (195 West Center Street) expressed concern about high property taxes, especially for non-primary residences which are taxed at a higher rate.

Ruth Ormond (150 North Main Street) spoke in support of hiring another police officer, stating that the crime rate is increasing and the current officers are getting burned out.

Several council members expressed appreciation for the public's input and explained that they had spent months reviewing the budget and making tough decisions. They encouraged residents to attend regular council meetings and to contact them directly with concern.

Motion to close the public hearing made by Council Member, seconded by Councilmember Christensen. All voted in favor.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Council Member Braegger, seconded by Council Member Christensen. All voted in favor.