AMERICAN FORK CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 16, 2026
SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES

Members Present:	
Bradley J. Frost	Mayor
Staci Carroll	Council Member
Tim Holley	Council Member
Ryan Hunter	Council Member
Ernie John	Council Member
Clark Taylor	Council Member
Staff Present:	
David Bunker	City Administrator
Camden Bird	Assist. City Administrator
Stephanie Finau	Deputy Recorder
Sam Kelly	Public Works Director
Patrick O'Brien	Development Services Director
Heather Schriever	Legal Counsel

The American Fork City Council held a special session on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, in the American Fork City Hall, located at 31 N. Church Street, commencing at 6:00 p.m.

SPECIAL SESSION

1. Review and action on a resolution regarding the Certified Tax Rate and setting the Truth in Taxation Public hearing date for August 11, 2026.
   Mayor Frost called the special session to order at 6:00 p.m. on June 16, 2026, in the Historic City Hall Council Chambers. He noted that the meeting would proceed according to the corrected agenda and introduced the first item: consideration of a resolution establishing the proposed tax rate and setting an August 11, 2026, Truth in Taxation public hearing. He then invited Ms. Montoya to present the item.

   Ms. Montoya explained that the special session was necessary because the city must submit a proposed tax rate to the State by June 22, before the next regular Council meeting. She noted that the Council had previously adopted the tentative budget on May 12 and the interim budget on June 9. She stated that the proposed rate would be included on county property-tax notices sent to residents but would not be final until the Truth in Taxation public hearing on August 11. The Council could reduce the proposed increase before final adoption but could not exceed the proposed 9% rate.

   Ms. Montoya explained that the proposed increase was intended to help fund staffing for the new fire station, which carries an estimated annual cost of $1.5 million. After budget reductions and other efforts to close the gap, staff recommended a 9% increase expected to generate approximately $660,000. She estimated the impact at about $33 annually for the average resident, or roughly $2.75 per month, representing approximately 1.4% of the total property tax bill.

Mayor Frost asked Ms. Montoya to state the proposed tax rate for the public record. Ms. Montoya explained that the City's certified general tax rate was .001395. She stated that the proposed 9% increase, intended to generate approximately $660,000, would establish a proposed general tax rate of .001516.

Council Member Taylor confirmed that the Council's action would establish the proposed rate, set the August 11 Truth in Taxation hearing, and allow the Council to consider final adoption following that hearing. He stated that he was struggling with the proposed tax increase despite supporting the new fire station and recognizing staff's efforts to reduce the budget and identify approximately $900,000 in other funding. He expressed concern about the cumulative financial pressures facing residents, including inflation and wages not keeping pace with rising costs, and stated that he believed additional reductions or tradeoffs should be considered before adopting the increase.

Council Member Holley stated that he shared Council Member Taylor's concerns about a tax increase and indicated that it would take a significant change in circumstances for him to support one. He cited the cumulative effect of inflation, rising water rates, prior school district property-tax increases, and anticipated increases in impact fees. He expressed concern that household costs were increasing faster than wages and stated that the City should avoid adding to residents' financial burden.

Council Member Holley said he had provided the Council with ideas for addressing the fire-station funding need without a tax increase, including reviewing wage increases and other General Fund expenditures. Although he was willing to support the proposed rate for purposes of proceeding through the Truth in Taxation process, he stated that he was unlikely to support the increase at final adoption.

Ms. Montoya clarified that the proposed $660,000 increase was authorized under a new tax law and would be specifically earmarked for fire salaries. She explained that if the increase were not ultimately approved, the city could not use that revenue source and the new fire station would not be fully staffed. She further noted that the interim budget would need to be adopted by June 30 and that the $660,000 fire-staffing line item would remain separate from the remainder of the budget.

Council Member Holley asked whether the City could instead reduce other General Fund expenditure and reallocate those funds to firefighter staffing. Ms. Montoya indicated that doing so would require a budget amendment. Council Member Holley stated that he would support making those types of reductions if necessary, reiterating that public safety and staffing the new fire station should remain the City's highest priority while avoiding additional financial pressure on residents.

Council Member Hunter acknowledged Council Member Holley's work in identifying potential budget reductions and stated that he hoped the City could find an alternative to the proposed tax increase. He expressed concern, however, that a significant portion of the suggested reductions appeared to involve limiting employee wage increases. He noted the difficulty of citing inflation and stagnant wages as reasons to avoid increasing taxes while also considering wage increases for City employees that may not keep pace with inflation.

Council Member Holley clarified that his proposal would not eliminate employee wage increases. He stated that the city could provide a 4% increase, which he believed would exceed the current inflation rate and private-sector wage growth, while still identifying the $660,000 needed for fire staffing. He noted that some departments had experienced substantially larger increases, citing the library as an example where wages had increased approximately 22% over the previous two years without adding a full-time equivalent position. He stated that reducing larger proposed increases to approximately 4% would provide budget flexibility while still giving employees raises.

Council Member Carroll stated that she would want to better understand the reasons for department wage increases before limiting them to 4%. She noted that, as a Library Board member, she understood that library wages had historically been very low and believed recent increases may have been intended to bring compensation closer to an appropriate market standard.

Ms. Montoya explained that the city benchmarks compensation against surrounding cities and comparable government-sector employers rather than relying solely on the Consumer Price Index. She stated that library wages had been below the City's benchmark in prior years, requiring larger-than-normal adjustments to bring employees closer to market levels.

Mr. Bunker added that compensation benchmarking can identify individual departments or positions that require increases above inflation in order to remain competitive and retain qualified employees. He noted that the city had experienced similar market adjustments in other areas, including engineering and building inspection, where compensation had needed to increase substantially to address recruitment and retention challenges. He confirmed that the library's recent wage increases reflected that type of market-based adjustment.

Council Member Holley clarified that he was not proposing a specific reduction to library wages or identifying any single department as the sole source of savings. He stated that the Council should evaluate multiple budget options and make difficult decisions as necessary because the Council members are ultimately accountable for the adopted budget. Council Member Holley shared that he had recently been laid off as part of a workforce reduction at his company and stated that many residents were facing layoffs, stagnant wages, or compensation that was not keeping pace with inflation. He contrasted those circumstances with the City's proposed General Fund expenditure increase of approximately 17% and argued that reducing that increase to approximately 15% could produce the $660,000 needed for fire staffing without raising taxes.

Council Member Holley reiterated that the City should continue to benchmark wages and retain qualified employees but maintained that there were multiple budget levers available to fund the needed firefighters. He urged the Council to consider those options and make the necessary tradeoffs to prioritize public safety without imposing an additional tax increase on residents.

Council Member Taylor stated that his concern with the proposed tax increase was primarily philosophical. He expressed concern that the City repeatedly relies on tax increases to address new financial needs rather than making more fundamental budget adjustments. Drawing from his own experience of becoming unemployed after owning a business for many years, he stated that individuals and businesses are sometimes forced to make difficult changes when resources are limited.

Council Member Taylor noted that residents were already facing multiple cost increases, including anticipated water and secondary-water rate increases, and questioned what would prevent the city from returning to taxpayers for additional revenue in future years as costs continue to rise. He emphasized that the city should identify expenditures that could be reduced, deferred, or eliminated rather than treating a tax increase as the default solution. He stated that he was not advocating for across-the-board salary reductions or discounting the importance of retaining qualified employees. However, he suggested that the Council examine other areas of the budget, including vehicle replacement practices, take-home vehicle policies, and City-subsidized services or amenities that may be considered discretionary. He concluded that the City needed to consider different approaches and make difficult tradeoffs rather than continuing to rely on tax increases while residents face increasing financial pressures.

Council Member Carroll offered a counterpoint, stating that the proposed increase was connected to a significant expansion of City services through construction and staffing of a new fire station. She said the situation was not directly comparable to an individual or business reducing expenses after a job loss because the city was choosing to add a major public-safety service. Council Member Carroll noted that the city had already absorbed most of the cost of staffing the new station within the existing budget, leaving approximately $660,000 to be addressed. She expressed surprise that staff had been able to reduce the remaining need for that amount, particularly because the City does not receive automatic inflationary increases in property-tax revenue and sales-tax revenue had remained flat.

Ms. Montoya added that funding the full cost of new fire-station staffing entirely through property taxes would have required an estimated annual increase of approximately $70 per resident. She stated that staff had reduced the proposed impact to approximately $33 per resident annually by incorporating the remaining costs into the existing budget.

Council Member Carroll stated that the city could not reasonably expand services by staffing a new fire station while also expecting staff to eliminate other services or expenditures to absorb the entire cost. She questioned what programs or services the Council would be willing to reduce in order to accommodate the new public-safety investment without additional revenue.

Council Member Taylor responded that the fire station was the primary new service being added and asked what other changes within the City’s operations were contributing to the budget increase. Council Member Carroll replied that the principal factors were inflation and the cost of staffing the new fire station.

Mayor Frost noted that inflationary pressures had accumulated over several years without being fully addressed through a tax increase. He stated that the City had increased its property tax rate only once during his time in office, approximately four years earlier, and that inflation eventually reached a point where it must be addressed.

Ms. Montoya clarified that the prior tax increase occurred four years earlier and that cumulative Consumer Price Index growth during that period was approximately 18%. She stated that the proposed 9% increase was therefore below cumulative inflation and would not fully offset the increased costs experienced by the city.

Council Member Carroll stated that the city had already made substantial budget reductions and expressed frustration with the suggestion that staff had not learned to operate with fewer resources. She argued that further reductions would require the Council to identify specific services it was willing to reduce or eliminate, such as library services, rather than making general calls to cut spending. She stated that the Council needed to recognize the tradeoffs involved in additional reductions and opposed relying on employee wage cuts or limited wage increases as the primary solution, expressing concern that doing so would create longer-term recruitment and retention problems.

Council Member Holley stated that the estimated $33 annual impact on residents did not fully reflect the broader effect of the proposed property-tax increase. He noted that businesses would also pay higher property taxes and argued that those costs would ultimately be passed on to residents through higher prices, reduced wages, reduced hiring, or lower business revenue. He estimated that the overall impact could be closer to $60 per person annually when those indirect effects were considered.

Council Member Holley also expressed concern that diverting household spending toward property taxes could reduce local consumer spending and, in turn, sales-tax revenue. Referencing the City newsletter's comparison of the increase to the cost of a meal at a local restaurant, he argued that residents who reduce discretionary spending may spend less at local businesses, affecting business revenue, employment, and the City's sales-tax base. He stated that these impacts could be particularly significant for small businesses and noted that the city was already concerned about business closures and flat sales-tax revenue.

Council Member Holley stated that broader economic conditions and federal fiscal policy were outside the City's control, but the City could control its own spending decisions. He reiterated that he had provided several potential options for consideration and urged the Council to focus on expenditure reductions as an alternative to the proposed tax increase.

Council Member John stated that the Consumer Price Index did not fully reflect residents' cost-of-living pressures because it excludes certain expenses, including food and fuel. He agreed that limiting compensation could create unintended costs by making it harder for the city to retain qualified employees. He noted that turnover carries its own costs, including recruitment, training, and potential service delays. He referenced the City's past difficulty retaining engineering staff, which affected the City's ability to keep up with development-related work and created frustration among developers. He stated that compensation was not the area he would prefer to reduce.

Council Member John commended Ms. Montoya and Mr. Bunker for identifying funding to operate an interim fire station rather than issuing bonds for a larger permanent station estimated to cost $20 million to $30 million. He stated that this approach represented a meaningful cost-saving measure. He said that service reductions could be considered if necessary but emphasized that the Council should clearly identify and communicate any services residents would lose in exchange for avoiding a tax increase. He concluded that he was open to evaluating those difficult tradeoffs but did not yet know where the city could reduce $660,000.

Council Member Carroll stated that the annual cost to staff the new fire station was approximately $1.6 million, while the proposed tax increase would generate only $660,000. She emphasized that the city had already absorbed the remaining staffing cost through reductions and adjustments elsewhere in the budget.

Mayor Frost acknowledged that the discussion involved difficult decisions and stated that adopting the budget was among the Council's most significant responsibilities. He cautioned against minimizing the effect of even small tax increases, noting that every tax dollar could otherwise be used by residents for other purposes. He expressed confidence that the Council and staff would work together to resolve the issue. He then asked whether the Council needed to determine its direction on the proposed tax increase before adopting the interim budget, noting that if the increase were removed from consideration, the city would need to amend the budget and identify another way to address the funding gap.

Ms. Montoya requested directions from the Council on whether fully staffing the new fire station was a non-negotiable priority for the budget.

Council Member John stated that Station 53 needed to be staffed on a 24-hour basis.

Council Member Holley suggested that the Council could consider phasing in staffing rather than adding all firefighter full-time equivalents in a single year. He asked whether the City could add 9 or 10 firefighters initially, while acknowledging that Fire Department staff had previously explained the operational considerations. He stated that adding 11.5 positions at once represented a substantial cost increase, particularly in light of recent public-safety wage increases and staffing growth and suggested that a phased approach could be another option for addressing the budget gap.

Mr. Bunker explained that fully staffing Station 53 requires 12 firefighters because the department operates three shifts with four firefighters assigned to each shift. He stated that each shift needs 2 personnel available for the ambulance and 2 for the fire apparatus, as the department cannot safely deploy either unit with fewer than two firefighters. He clarified that the budget included 9 new firefighter positions because one firefighter from each shift at Station 51 would be reassigned to Station 53. This would allow Station 53 to be staffed with 4 firefighters per shift while reducing staffing capacity at Station 51.

Mr. Bunker stated that the proposed staffing model represents the minimum operational staffing level. Station 52 would have 4 firefighters, Station 53 would have 4 firefighters, and Station 51 would have 8 firefighters. He explained that this configuration would allow the department to deploy 2 ambulances and 2 fire apparatus, which is important because the department frequently receives concurrent calls. He noted that Station 51 is the busiest fire station in Utah County and that the department is already operating at a bare-minimum staffing level across its stations.

Council Member Taylor reiterated that the Fire Department was operating at bare-minimum staffing levels across all stations. Council Member Hunter noted that the 9 new firefighter positions included in the budget were already below the original staffing request. Mr. Bunker confirmed that the original request was for 16 firefighters, which would better account for leave, vacation, and other staffing coverage needs. Council Member John added that the higher staffing level was intended to address time-off coverage.

Council Member Hunter stated that the preferred staffing model would provide 5 firefighters per shift to operate two apparatus, while the proposed plan represented the minimum level needed to open Station 53. He explained that the city was reducing the immediate budget impact by transferring firefighters from other stations and anticipated that additional staffing would likely be needed within the next several years. He also noted that opening a station incrementally was less costly than building, equipping, and fully staffing an additional station all at once, which could create a much larger annual budget increase.

Council Member Hunter stated that he was willing to consider alternatives to the tax increase but believed those alternatives needed to identify specific service reductions and their consequences. He cautioned that reducing services could result in positions not being filled or employees losing their jobs, including positions needed to operate programs or support City operations. He emphasized the importance of retaining key staff, noting that the city could face significant operational challenges if it lost experienced employees.

Council Member Taylor clarified that neither he nor Council Member Holley was advocating for salary reductions, reduced firefighter staffing, or cuts to life-safety services. He stated that his concern was whether a tax increase should be the City's default response to a budget shortfall, particularly during a year when residents were also facing increases related to TSSD, North Pointe, secondary water, culinary water, and other costs. He reiterated that staffing Station 53 was necessary and noted that members of her own family lived in the area served by the new station. However, he stated that the Council should be willing to examine the full budget and identify possible tradeoffs rather than assuming the only available solution was additional revenue from taxpayers.

Council Member Taylor suggested that the Council could bring department leaders together to identify priorities and determine which programs, services, or amenities could be reduced, deferred, or modified while protecting core public-safety, water, sewer, and other essential services. He used recreation programs, such as gymnastics, as an example of services that might need to be evaluated if the city sought to avoid a tax increase. He emphasized that he did not yet have specific recommendations and would need to review the budget in greater detail. He supported proceeding with the proposed rate so the city could meet its deadline and continue the Truth in Taxation process, but he questioned whether future budget challenges should consistently be addressed through tax increases. He concluded by noting that even a relatively small annual increase can be meaningful to residents on fixed incomes or limited budgets.

Council Member Hunter asked what timeline the Council should follow if it approved the proposed rate in order to meet the statutory deadline but then wished to conduct a more detailed review of the budget and potential alternatives.

Council Member Taylor stated that individual Council Members had a responsibility to review the budget more closely and meet with staff as needed to better understand the available options. Ms. Montoya stated that she was available to answer questions, review recommendations, and provide additional information by email or in meetings with Council Members.

Council Member Hunter asked how the review timeline related to the June 22 deadline and the start of the fiscal year. Council Member John noted that the Council would adopt the interim budget the following week and asked whether the budget could later be amended if the Council identified changes. He stated that approving the proposed rate at that time would only allow the city to proceed with the Truth in Taxation hearing process and would not commit the Council to final adoption of the increase.

Council Member Hunter stated that he believed Truth in Taxation discussions should occur regularly so the Council and public can openly evaluate whether the tax rate should increase, decrease, or remain unchanged. He clarified that his question was not whether the budget could be amended, but when any amendment would need to be prepared if the Council ultimately decided not to adopt the proposed increase.

Ms. Montoya explained that the city was required by law to adopt its budget by June 30. She stated that budget amendments could be made at any time after the start of the fiscal year in July. Council Member Hunter noted that the city would initially operate under the adopted budget, which assumed the proposed tax increase.

Council Member Carroll clarified that the fire-station portion tied to the increase would be held separately. Ms. Montoya confirmed that the City could not spend the revenue associated with the proposed increase until after the Truth in Taxation hearing and final adoption process, which would allow the funds to be available beginning September 1.

Mayor Frost noted that if the Council ultimately chose not to adopt the increase, it would need to amend the budget and identify another source for the $660,000. Ms. Montoya confirmed.

Mr. Bunker explained that at the August 11 Truth in Taxation hearing, the Council could decide not to proceed with the proposed 9% increase or could adopt any lower rate between the certified rate and the proposed rate. He stated that the Council would then adopt the final budget, since the budget being considered at that time was an interim budget. He further explained that if the final adopted tax rate generated less revenue than the interim budget assumed, the Council would need to amend the budget to align expenditures with available revenues. That process would require the Council to identify the specific reductions or other adjustments needed to address the remaining funding gap.

Council Member Hunter moved to approve Resolution No. 2026-06-__R adopting the 2026 Proposed Tax rate for fiscal year 2026-2027 and set date and time for the public hearing for Truth in Taxation on August 11th, 2026, at 7:00 PM. Council Member Holley seconded the motion. Voting was as follows:

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Ryan Hunter, Council Member
SECONDER:	Tim Holley, Council Member
YES:	Hunter, Holley, John, Carroll, Taylor

2. Review of the resolution adopting the Property Tax Impact Schedule.
Ms. Montoya stated that state law requires the City to review the property tax impact schedule whenever the budget is discussed. She noted that the schedule had already been presented to the Council on multiple occasions and simply reiterated the information previously discussed. No action was required on the item.

3. Consideration and action on entering into a closed session to discuss the professional character or competence of an individual(s) as described in Utah State Code 52-4-204 and 52-4-205.
Mayor Frost noted the closed session would be to discuss the professional character or competence of an individual. They would meet in the downstairs workroom, and at the end of the closed session they would adjourn from that location.

Council Member John moved to enter into a closed session at 6:47 p.m. Council Member Taylor seconded the motion. Voting was as follows:

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Ernie John, Council Member
SECONDER:	Clark Taylor, Council Member
YES:	Hunter, Holley, John, Carroll, Taylor

The City Council met in a closed session to discuss the professional character or competence of an individual(s). Those present included Mayor Frost, Council Member Carroll, Council Member Holley, Council Member Hunter, Council member John, and Council Member Taylor. Also present was legal counsel Heather Schriever.

The professional character or competence of an individual(s) was discussed. See attached affidavit.

4. Adjournment.

Stephanie Finau

Stephanie Finau
Deputy Recorder

AMERICAN FORK CITY
MAYOR'S AFFIDAVIT
Bradley J. Frost, Mayor

I, Mayor Bradley J. Frost, do solemnly swear and affirm that the closed session of the American Fork City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, was to discuss the professional character and competence of individual(s).

Bradley J. Frost, Mayor

State of Utah
County of Utah

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17 day of June 2026 by Bradley J. Frost.

Terilyn Lurker
Signature of Notary Public

My Commission Expires: 2/4/28

TERILYN LURKER
NOTARY PUBLIC-STATE OF UTAH
My Commission Expires February 4, 2028
COMMISSION NUMBER 735018