



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	Assistant City Administrator
Terilyn Lurker	City Recorder
Derric Rykert	Community Services Director
Stephanie Finau	Deputy Recorder
Patrick O'Brien	Development Services Director
Anna Montoya	Finance Director
George Schade	IT Director
Heather Schriever	Legal Counsel
Cameron Paul	Police Chief
Sam Kelly	Public Works Director

Also Present: Ryan Walker, Aaron Booker, Kevin Barnes, Chris Chamberlain, Kelly Stone, Clyne and Ann Long, Jan Chamberlain, Daniel Sroka, Heidi Barben, John Mulholland, Tom Tingy, Julie Rodriguez, Greg Hazard, Mary Mitchell, Libby Oscarson, Taraleigh Bennett, Rob Shelton

The American Fork City Council held a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, in the American Fork City Hall, located at 31 North Church Street, commencing at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Frost welcomed everyone to the public hearing. He explained the city was not adopting the certified tax rate this evening; this was to allow the public to comment on the proposed property tax. *The City Council would adopt the certified tax rate on August 25, 2026, at the City Council Meeting.* Mayor Frost noted that comments will be allowed in person and online at a

Teams link which can be found on the city's website. He turned the time over to Anna Montoya, the Finance Director, and then to David Bunker, the City Administrator.

Ms. Montoya explained the purpose of the public hearing was to hear comments regarding the proposed tax increase. She noted there was an option to participate virtually as required by legislation and the link can be found online. Ms. Montoya referenced the Property Tax Impact Schedule which was previously adopted and noted the cost of the increase was to partially staff the new fire station in the amount of \$660,000. She also referenced the Notice of Property Tax Increase that was sent out, showing the proposed increase was \$33.41 (\$2.78 per month) equaling an 848% increase. The third notice was the combined Utah County Notice of Property Tax increase which states every entity in the county proposing a tax increase. These documents were available on the table in the council chambers as well as on the city's website.

Mr. Bunker thanked the council for allowing staff and citizens to come before them. He pointed out the city raised taxes in 2008 and 2021. Before the council was a proposal to consider an 8.7% tax increase. They will hear from residents and businesses owners who are affected by this tax increase. While this public hearing does not include a back-and-forth dialogue, information presented to the council will help them better understand information presented tonight.

Mr. Bunker explained the certified tax rate, which was the property tax calculated for each entity that allows it to collect the same amount of property tax that it did the prior year, with additional revenue due to new growth.

Mr. Bunker asked why a city could consider a tax increase. Reasons include inflationary pressures, regionwide growth within the city, competition for resources including employees, contractors, and materials. Another reason is an increase in services.

Mr. Bunker explained the budgetary process. Starting in February, the city council met to discuss the budget. They start with a clean slate, based on priorities. Public safety is critical for our residents. The city is considering adding another fire station on 620 South which will be Station 53. The fire station will need twelve personnel to man the station. This budget includes nine new fire fighters; fire fighters would be taken from other stations to meet the needs. Mr. Bunker stated the cost is about \$1.5 million annually. The property tax proposed will be \$660,000, and the remainder come from the existing budget. Recently, he read that Eagle Mountain raised their property taxes significantly. At their public hearing, a resident stated that if the citizens are tightening their belts, the city needs to do so as well. American Fork believes in the same principle of finding cuts to make, and they have done that. Mr. Bunker commended city staff and the council for working hard to get to this point.

Mayor Frost explained they will now allow for public comment on the proposed tax increase. He asked the citizens to be respectful and courteous. Public comments will be two minutes per person, and the comments should stay on topic, which is the proposed property tax rate. If

anyone wants to talk about other items, they are encouraged to come to a regular city council meeting. Mayor Frost asked that they state their name and note if you are a resident or business owner in American Fork.

Ryan Walker. Mr. Walker stated he is a resident of American Fork. His family had lived here for several years, and it was the best city they have lived in. He was completely against the tax increase. Every year they notice their bill increase. The spending is getting out of control, and he hoped they were being judicious. He understands that wages have gone up significantly year after year. He knows they have great employees, but he did not think it was sustainable. We have great talent, but they may need to let them go. They want to keep those who are invested in the city. He thanked them for their time and service.

Aaron Booker. Mr. Booker stated he does not live in American Fork. Earlier this year, he was stopped in Farmington by an American Fork police officer under the false guise of an HOV violation. He stated the encounter escalated unnecessarily, with Officer Kitchen resorting to threats when he declined to comply with Officer Kitchen's unlawful order. Officer Kitchen then refused to complete the purpose of the stop despite his requests for a citation so he could handle this in court. He noted he filed a complaint with the American Fork Police Department days later. Shortly after the recording of the stop went viral, Officer Kitchen then called and delivered a forced apology. Mr. Booker accepted that until he obtained a copy of the police report which was written after the apology and contained false statements. Mr. Booker stated that Officer Kitchen works as a school resource officer, and he felt the city should not allow this officer to continue serving as an SRO. The city's inactions speak volumes and signal their willingness to tolerate abuse of authority. He noted that he will help motivate the city with a civil right lawsuit.

Kevin Barnes. Mr. Barnes thanked them for serving. He has been there and done that, and noted some residents appreciate it. He stated they should have put the Public Works administration building to a vote. He noted his property taxes would go up \$35. He is retired, but he can afford the increase. He noted it was not about the dollar amount, but the concept of what was going on. They have had a lot of discussions about not having large property tax increases at the time. It was agreed they would make more frequent increases that were smaller amounts. In talking with the community, the residents agreed. Mr. Barnes felt the city should keep the increase to about 4% and do that every year.

Chris Chamberlain. Mr. Chamberlain stated he built a home here 40 years ago. His property tax was more now than his original house payment. They talk about small increases, but they are huge. In looking over his property taxes for the last ten years, they have doubled. They are pricing those people on fixed incomes out of living here.

Daniel Sroka. Mr. Sroka stated he was an accountant, so he loves numbers. To raise \$502,000 in taxes, it increases the resident property tax by \$33.41 per resident. He also knows that lawsuits are expensive, which includes legal and settlement fees. There are many future lawsuits that will

come. That would be about \$50 per resident. Why do the residents have to pay for the lawsuits? The residents are the ones who pay because of the city's incapability to uphold the constitution. It comes out of their pockets.

Heidi Barben. Ms. Barben stated she was one more voice that was concerned about the police force. She also had a weird incident several years ago. With her situation, and other situations, there seems to be lack of education or knowledge. She wanted to see more improvements for training. They needed to put victims first. She did not think it was being emphasized properly, and it was concerning.

John Mulholland. Mr. Mulholland stated he is a resident who has been here for many years. He was concerned about stewardship of finances. He mentioned the city had recently signed an agreement with CentraCom. He has heard about lawsuits, and he has asked for a citizens review board. They also put up a big curb extension by his house that will be a hazard for bikes. He appreciated what they did, but he was concerned about some of the expenses.

Julie Rodriguez. Mr. Rodriguez thanked them for the opportunity to speak. She was a resident of the county but frequents American Fork. They still have not seen accountability and transparency within the Police Department. While she supports police departments, she was disappointed and does not trust this department or city. She wondered what it would take to get an interview with the mayor about what was going on.

Mayor Frost asked her to provide her information to the city recorder.

Greg Hazard. Mr. Hazard has shared with them that he has been a victim of the police department twice, and he explained those incidents. He noted that for those incidents, he has received apology letters. He noted he shared with them two months ago and only Council Member Hunter reached out to him to make sure he was satisfied. In June, Council Member Hunter noted the threats they have received. He wanted to make it clear that there was no room for threats on anyone. He came here two weeks ago on his concerns of Officer Kitchen. It was okay to agree to disagree. He was glad he was on the side of protecting children. He hoped the city was right, but if he was right then they all lose.

Cline Long. Mr. Long stated that property taxes were forcing seniors out of their homes. It was the only tax they must pay every year, no matter what they are earning. His taxes have increased by 30% over the last five years. Most have had their property values increase. The county claims the city gets 12.79% of the money paid of the property tax. The city claims they get the same amount every month. He should have gotten involved in the budget. Because of this, he started looking at the budget and stated that the \$660,000 for four fire fighters would be \$160,000 per person, which he felt was not the right wage for anyone. He thought their numbers were messed up; it showed most employees make close to \$100,000 each according to his calculations. He showed the budget went up \$67 million, and he did not know if that was correct.

Taraleigh Bennett. Ms. Bennett notes she lives in the city and understands the growth on the south side of town. She understands the growth as well as the importance of having public safety personnel close by for response. She was in favor of the increase and felt it was justified and felt the city needed this.

Steve Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin stated for years he was the pressman that printed the AF Citizen from 1980 to 2005. He was a concerned citizen wondering what was going on with the police department. He asked if there would be a meeting where the citizens would be told what was going on. He asked if they would be held accountable.

Curtis Grahm. Mr. Grahm stated he lives in the more historic part of the city. He understands the need for property taxes to maintain infrastructure. However, he was reminded of the wisdom of Benjamin Franklin who said to be cautious of the small expenses; a small leak will sink a mighty ship. A previous citizen noted that they should make small incremental tax increases, but he did not agree with that. Mr. Grahm stated there may have been a great amount of deliberation, but he feels like there is not much proof of the deliberation or of their due diligence. He requested a more robust explanation on the cuts in the budget. If they are making those cuts, they could increase those cuts slightly more to reach a more equitable tax increase. He also asked for greater clarity on the fire fighter's wages. He was also concerned about the police and flock cameras. He also requested the council bring back the original comments section to provide feedback on the city's website; the system was changed and he was not sure where to find it.

Rob Shelton. Mr. Shelton stated he was a resident and owner of multiple businesses. He stated he was a financial planner. He noted he has a concern with communication within the city. He noted they have said that public safety is a priority, but that was added last in the budget. He felt they were treated as political pawns. Why are they hiring a communications specialist, an administrative assistant, and economic development ahead of public safety? If public safety is the most important, then add that first so they can debate other budget items. If they are making public safety a priority, be honest with the public on what they are actually raising taxes on.

Mayor Frost asked if there were any additional comments from the public in the council chambers or online. There were no individuals online; there were a few citizens who were online but had left the meeting.

The Truth in Taxation Public Hearing closed at 7:46 p.m.



Terilyn Lurker, City Recorder