



PROVO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Joint Meeting with the Provo School District - Minutes

12:00 PM, Thursday, August 13, 2020

Electronic Meeting: [youtube.com/provocitycouncil](https://www.youtube.com/provocitycouncil)

Agenda ([0:00:00](#))

Roll Call ([0:08:21](#))

The following Provo City officials, staff, Provo School District officials participated:

Council Chair George Handley, conducting
Council Vice-chair David Harding
Councilor Shannon Ellsworth
Councilor David Shipley
Councilor Travis Hoban
Councilor Bill Fillmore
John Magness, Council Policy Analyst
Cliff Strachan, Council Executive Director
Hannah Salzl, Council Policy Analyst
Karen Tapahe, Community Relations Coord.
Elizabeth VanDerwerken, Council Exec Asst.
Wayne Parker, CAO

Dixon Holmes, Assistant CAO
Isaac Paxman, Deputy Mayor
Jim Petterson, School Board President
Melanie Hall, School Board Vice-President
Jennifer Partridge, School Board
Julie Rash, School Board
McKay Jensen, School Board
Nate Bryson, School Board
Rebecca Nielsen, School Board
Stefanie Bryant, PSD Business Admin.
Jason Cox, Deputy Superintendent

Excused: Superintendent Keith Rittel, Councilor David Sewell, Mayor Michelle Kaufusi

Councilor David Shipley offered the prayer.

Discussion Items from the Provo City Council

Discussion Items from the Provo School District

1. An update on the reopening of schools ([0:14:06](#))

Jim Petterson, School Board President, invited McKay Jensen to present. Mr. Jensen serves as president of the Utah School Board Association. Board Member McKay Jensen shared highlights from a recent interview with Governor Gary Herbert about statewide concerns and pressures with regards to schools and the pandemic. Mr. Jensen indicated that local school boards were prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being of staff and students, and have been following recommendations of the State and health department regarding the guidelines for opening schools. Mr. Jensen and other board members responded to questions from Councilors about various aspects of the guidelines, including recess, classroom capacities and schedules, and planning for the short-term while considering long-term impacts or consequences. The School Board members reiterated that for schools to remain open, the virus needed to be contained in the community and they would need the City's help.

Jason Cox, District Deputy Superintendent, said that the School District feels they have struck a good balance. Some issues would have to be handled on a case-by-case basis, such as decisions regarding specific school closures [due to localized outbreaks] and moving online. Jennifer Partridge, Board Member, noted that teachers were putting all learning online whether school is meeting in person or not; this should help any future transitions if changes were needed based on health guidelines. Julie Rash, Board Member, noted that the school district has also been working to address concerns for low-income families, including Wi-Fi hotspots and school lunches. Councilors Shannon Ellsworth and Travis Hoban asked questions about the state's guidelines with certain counts of infected individuals within specific schools or athletic teams. School board members responded to these questions and shared more insight into the process for making these determinations. Stefanie Bryant, School Board Business Administrator, highlighted several statistics which were factored into the ongoing analysis.

Board Member Melanie Hall asked whether the Council has considered a mask mandate. Mr. Handley indicated that the Council planned to discuss this at their upcoming meeting. Mr. Petterson indicated the School Board's willingness to educate the community on the urgency and importance for a mask mandate. Board members reiterated that increased compliance with the pandemic recommendations in the broader community would only continue to help schools with keeping community transmission low and keeping schools open. Mr. Cox also shared details of the district's efforts to facilitate online learning, with laptops issued to each student.

2. An update on the upcoming bond of the Provo School District ([0:55:28](#))

Stefanie Bryant, Provo School District Business Administrator, shared an update on the proposed bond for the Provo School District, which would replace the south gym and academic wing at Timpview High School. She highlighted the approximate impact to an average home or business, noting the route the Board would be forced to take if the bond did not succeed. Board Member Nate Bryson noted that the alternative was not 'to do nothing'; the alternative would result in a more costly process. Board Member Jennifer Partridge noted that this would be a single-issue bond, as conditions have deteriorated dramatically at Timpview over the last year. Mr. Jensen shared results from the board's recent Truth in Taxation hearing, which was intended to raise taxes for teacher salaries. The Board also found that the public has generally expressed more trust in the City Council than the School Board. After raising teacher salaries, Provo is still one of the lower-ranking districts in teacher pay.

Motion: Bill Fillmore moved to direct that a resolution of support for the School District bond be placed on the Council Meeting agenda for September 1, 2020. Seconded by David Harding.

Vote: Approved 6:0, with David Sewell excused.

Additional discussion as time permits ([1:16:09](#))

Council Chair George Handley invited any other discussion, comments, or questions in the remaining time. Mr. Jensen expressed appreciation for how engaged the Council is. He noted that during the pandemic, the importance of respecting and supporting expertise, thoughtfulness, and the good intentions of other groups was so important. He noted how distrust of institutions

Please Note – These minutes have been prepared with a timestamp linking the agenda items to the video discussion. Electronic version of minutes will allow citizens to view discussion held during council meeting.

had harmed our community's response to the pandemic. Mr. Jensen expressed the School Board's commitment to building trust within the community. He congratulated the Council on the way they have engaged the public on issues and earned the public's trust.

Councilor Bill Fillmore echoed that the City wanted to continue a close relationship with the School District as education was such an important component of the community. Councilor David Harding shared an update on the Council's sign committee and he highlighted some of the requirements for signs in the city and the School District indicated a willingness to review the sign standards and to distribute them to the local schools for consideration.

Adjournment

Adjourned by unanimous consent.