

**NORTH OGDEN CITY COUNCIL &
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING MINUTES**

January 5, 2021

The North Ogden City Council & Public Safety Building Committee convened in a virtual joint meeting on January 5, 2021 at 6:01 p.m. at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86304154906> or by Telephone: US: +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 646 558 8656 or YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCriqbePBxTucXEzRr6felhQ/videos>. Notice of time, place, and agenda of the meeting was posted on the bulletin board at the municipal office and posted to the Utah State Website on December 30, 2020. Notice of the annual meeting schedule was published in the Standard-Examiner on December 13, 2020.

PRESENT:	S. Neal Berube	Mayor
	Ryan Barker	Council Member
	Blake Cevering	Council Member
	Charlotte Ekstrom	Council Member
	Cheryl Stoker	Council Member
	Phillip Swanson	Council Member

STAFF PRESENT:	Jon Call	City Manager/Attorney
	Susan Nance	Interim City Recorder
	Dirk Quinney	Chief of Police
	Evan Nelson	Finance Director
	Jeremy Hindes	Lieutenant

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

M Brent Chugg	Chairman
Jay Johnson	Member
Robert Bolar	Member
Gary Stoker	Member
Chad Roylance	Member
Clark Crowther	Member/Lieutenant
Laura Barker	Member/Court

Visitors:	Brenda Ashdown	Edythe	Randall Winn
	Stefanie Casey	Susan Clements	Rachelle Krohn
	Mark Anderson	Meg Sanders	

Mayor Berube called the meeting to order. Council Member Cevering offered the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **READING OF DETERMINATION REGARDING CONDUCTING CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING WITHOUT ANCHOR LOCATION**

Mayor Berube read for the public record the determination regarding conducting this meeting without an anchor location. He also invited the Council to declare any conflicts of interest or disclose ex parte communications. No declarations were made.

ACTIVE AGENDA

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Brenda Ashdown, 193 E. Pleasant View Drive, stated that the lid on her blue garbage can was recently broken; she contacted the City last week and was told someone would respond the first of this week to collect it and replace it. She reported someone visited her property as promised and replaced her can and she wanted to recognize them for her efforts and bring it to the Mayor and Council's attention.

Mayor Berube thanked Ms. Ashdown for taking the time to provide positive feedback.

3. **REVIEW OF POLICE/COURT OPEN HOUSES**

Police Chief Quinney provided the Council with an overview of the work done by the Public Safety Committee; the Committee understood the importance of being open and transparent in their deliberations about the concept of building a new public safety building. They held two open houses in October on October 14 and 29 and attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Committee, members of City Administration, and Police Department staff. He believes the open house events were a great success and the Committee received positive feedback. Those who have reached out to the City have communicated their understanding of the need to build a new facility to meet the current and future needs of the Police Department.

Mayor Berube thanked Chief Quinney and the Committee for their willingness to engage the public regarding this important project; he wished more residents had been in attendance, but he is grateful for those that participated.

4. **DISCUSSION REGARDING THE NEXT PROJECT STEPS AND DEADLINES**

Public Safety Committee Chairman Chugg thanked the Council for their consideration of this project; the Committee feels that some critical steps need to be taken this year in order to get the project moving. First is to hire a design firm that can develop the design for a facility customized to meet the needs of the City for the next 30 to 50 years. If the decision is made today to seek a design firm, it will likely be until the summer of 2021 that they are able to finalize a design. Additionally, the City needs to seek advice from its financial advisor, Zion's Bank, regarding the most appropriate funding options for the project. Finally, the City will need to purchase the neighboring property and demolish the home there to allow for the facility to be built. He concluded that the clock is ticking fast and the Committee feels it is important to move quickly in order for construction to begin early in 2022 and for the Police Department to move to the new facility later that same year. He asked that the Mayor and Council work with City Administration to address the three main points he raised tonight.

Mayor Berube stated that the Council is aware of some community opposition to this project; several months ago, each Committee member was asked to reach out to 10 individuals in the community to help in spreading the word about the importance of the project and generating community support. He asked if that was done. Mr. Chugg deferred to Committee members present to provide information about their community engagement efforts, but noted that the bottom line is that the current facility was built in the 1950's, is not seismically safe, and cannot meet the City's public safety needs because it was never designed to be one. That information was provided to residents who were contacted by Committee members. Mayor Berube stated he understands the importance of the project, but noted the Council has not asked the tough detailed questions about the project. He noted that a price estimate for the court facility is \$2 million and residents will want to know if the City plans to operate a regional court after spending that amount of money. He stated that Council Member Stoker is the Council's liaison to the Police Department and Council Member Swanson is the Council's liaison to Administration relating to finances. He would like those two individuals to meet with Administration to ask those difficult questions. He believes it is important to formulate a design of a facility that will last 30 to 50 years and that it is necessary to pursue neighboring property acquisition, but he asked City Manager/Attorney Call to coordinate meetings between Council Members Stoker and Swanson with the Police Department and Finance Director Nelson. He concluded he believes the condition of the public safety facility is impacting the morale of employees who work there and is hindering the City's ability to recruit and retain quality Police Officers. Chief Quinney agrees that is the case; he is proud of the Department's Police Officers and noted they do not complain about their working conditions, but he can see the impact the facility has on them.

Mayor Berube then stated that City Administration is closely monitoring tax revenue trends and once the Council has more detailed information about the City's financial position now and in the next Fiscal Year (FY), it will be easier to make decisions

regarding this project. He asked that the Committee give him and the Council two additional weeks to consider that information before making a decision on whether to proceed with hiring a design firm. He asked Mr. Call if he has an idea how much the City will pay a design firm for their services, to which Mr. Call answered \$250,000 to \$300,000.

High level discussion then centered on negotiations with the adjoining property owner regarding the City's acquisition of their property for this project. Mayor Berube asked if the City can utilize the services of Committee Member Robert Bolar to prepare a comparative market analysis for the property and home needed for the project. Mr. Call answered yes and Mr. Bolar indicated his willingness to perform that service.

Mayor Berube and Committee Chair Chugg then facilitated discussion among the Council and Committee Members regarding efforts that members of each body can take to communicate the importance of the project to the community. Council Member Swanson suggested that the City solicit the services of the Justice Court prosecutor to provide input regarding the court needs within the building. Mayor Berube stated that information would be very helpful in addition to information about the finances for the project and the information from the Police Department regarding their needs.

Relative to financing, Mayor Berube stated that he is supportive of pursuing a general obligation bond, but he is willing to consider other funding options as well. Council Member Swanson suggested that we could provide a general scale. For instance, if we bonded for \$5 million what would the impact be? If we bonded for \$7.5 what would the impact be? If we bonded for \$10 million what would the impact be? This way we have actual numbers so that we can help residents understand rather than inflated imaginary numbers.

Laura Barker, Committee Member, stated that in addition to seeking input from the Justice Court prosecutor, the City could benefit from receiving information from Judge Lambert; he works for other communities under an interlocal agreement and he could provide detailed information regarding the differences between a local court and a regional court. Mayor Berube stated that information would be very helpful and noted that all information will be brought back to the entire City Council for their review and consideration prior to a decision being made.

Discussion then centered on materials that can be shared with the public via a media campaign for the project.

Chief Quinney then stated that the Police Department and other City representatives have been working on this project for two years; many of the questions that have been asked tonight have been answered in the past. Mayor Berube stated he understands that, but this is a very costly project and there is some opposition to it in the community and it is important to answer the questions that they have. He added that some of the questions

that have been answered have been addressed in a private forum and it is important to make that information public. Council Member Swanson agreed; he noted that it is important to ask hard questions, but it is also the Council's role to make hard decisions on behalf of the community. North Ogden City operates under a representative form of government and this Council needs to be willing to make a hard decision regarding this project. If residents wish to take action in response to the Council's decision, that is their choice. Mayor Berube agreed; the Council must have the courage to make a difficult decision, but if the Council supports a general obligation bond, that matter will be voted upon by the residents at the next municipal election. Council Member Swanson stated that is true for a general obligation bond, but the Council has the ability to issue a revenue bond and that does not require a vote of the people. He is concerned that some decisions are made responsive to outcry from a small group of vocal residents, but it is not appropriate to make decisions for all of North Ogden's residents based upon the input from that smaller group. Mayor Berube stated that he understands Council Member Swanson's comments, but he will continue to be vocal that residents deserve to have input on what happens in their City. Council Member Swanson stated that the greatest amount of input a resident has is their vote for their elected representatives and if they are concerned about actions taken by the Council, they can vote them out at the next election. Mayor Berube stated that he would like for the Council to have all pertinent information regarding the project before making that tough decision; he would also like all decisions regarding this project to be open and transparent. Council Member Swanson stated that is his desire as well.

Mayor Berube then asked Mr. Call to work with Zion's Bank to understand the processes for either a general obligation bond or a revenue bond; that information would be helpful to the Council when they begin discussing funding the project.

Council Member Ekstrom agreed that it is important to get as much information as possible and make that information available to the public; one hurdle the Council will need to overcome is that the general public does not understand how much this type of building costs to construct, but if the City can provide adequate information and justification of the costs, the public will be much more understanding. Mayor Berube agreed; he is committed to gathering all information about this project and laying it out completely for the public so that they can review and provide input regarding this proposal.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Meg Sanders, 2915 N. 875 E., stated she noticed that Robert Bolar and Council Member Swanson are handling social media efforts for the public safety building project, but she wondered how residents will be provided with information if they do not use social media. She also wondered if the information will be placed on the Facebook page managed by North Ogden City rather than advertised on other pages and shared to that

page. Mayor Berube stated that it will be on the City page, but he is happy it will be shared on other pages in order to get the message to as many people as possible. He added that for those not using social media, there will be information in the local newspaper and the City will utilize other advertising opportunities available. Ms. Sanders stated this is a very important issue; social media is powerful, but the message can be influenced by who controls it. She then stated that last time she attended a Council meeting she heard a discussion about continuing to plant flowers in the decorative planters along Washington Boulevard and she wondered if the City will use a local nursery for that large purchase. Mr. Call stated that the flowers are sourced through a local Weber County nursery. Ms. Sanders then noted that on December 24 at 5:00 p.m., her car was broken into and her purse was stolen along with many other items. Many of her neighbors were also victimized. She did not notice that her purse was taken immediately, but she did see that the person who took it had used her bank cards to clear out her accounts. She called the North Ogden Police Department to report the theft, but the responding officer only spoke to her for 10 minutes. He did not call Target to check their surveillance system after verifying that her cards had been used there. She added that in December she chased a person who was stealing packages from front porches; she got a license plate of the vehicle that was being used and got a description of the woman and she provided that information to the Police Department. She later found that her report was not pursued. Just last week, Roy Police captured the person who had been stealing packages in her neighborhood, but she never heard that from her own Police Department. She stated that so many people are resigned to the fact that vehicle break-ins and package thefts are the norm in North Ogden City. While she does not know the difficulty of being a Police Officer, she does know they are busy. But, she is concerned they are becoming complacent in relation to these petty thefts. She then concluded by again discussing the Public Safety building project; the project costs have been estimated at \$11.2 million, which is the largest project in City history. Now is the time to talk to citizens who have no trust in their government and ask them how they feel in a time that they are struggling and adjusting to tighter bank accounts. She thanked the Mayor and Council for their time and service.

Mayor Berube thanked Ms. Sanders for her comments; he noted North Ogden has enjoyed being a very safe City in the past, but as the City grows, so will crime. The City has less than one officer per every 1,000 residents, which is lower than the national average of 2.2 officers per 1,000 residents. It will be very difficult to continue to preserve the safety of the community if staffing levels are not increased and if the City is not able to retain quality Police Officers.

Susan Clements, 668 E. 3125 N., stated she was hopeful the Council would have made a decision tonight regarding the Public Safety building, but she understands the reasons that decision has been delayed. She noted she has heard there are grant programs available for the project and she asked if anyone has looked into such programs. Chief Quinney stated that he has spent the last 18 months reviewing grant programs for which the project would be eligible, but he has yet to find one that the City would qualify for

that would make a substantial fiscal impact for the project. Ms. Clements then stated she would encourage the City to broadcast their public meetings; this would help to improve transparency and give residents the opportunity to understand the entire discussion surrounding a project. She then asked if the City has considered combining police forces with other neighboring cities, similar to what has been done for Fire services in the community. Chief Quinney stated that issue has been studied dating back 40 years and the results of those studies are that combining forces would not be beneficial from a safety and financial standpoint. Mayor Berube added that the Chief is very conservative and is doing all he can to keep the costs low; he has committed to finding ways to fund some of the equipment needed for the building if the City is able to build it.

Brenda Ashdown, 193 E. Pleasant View Drive, stated it saddens her that only 35 people attended the Public Safety Building open house meetings though she understands that could have been impacted by weather and COVID-19. She stated that she appreciates that the City will continue to advertise the project through the City website and social media, but many people would not know about the project if they did not attend these meetings to find out what is happening in the City in general. She stated that when it comes time to make a decision, there will be many people against the project simply because they do not know enough about it. Mayor Berube stated that is likely going to be the case; however, the Council and Committee can only do what they can to advertise the project and then fulfill their role and make a tough decision on behalf of the entire City. Ms. Ashdown stated she is comforted that the Council will do their due diligence before making the decision.

6. COUNCIL/MAYOR/STAFF COMMENTS

Council Member Swanson thanked Ms. Sanders for her great comments; given the scope of the Public Safety building project, it would be appropriate to invest in a well written bulletin that could be mailed to each household in the City to answer questions about the project. Mayor Berube stated he would not oppose that and he also asked Chief Quinney to follow up with Ms. Sanders regarding her comments about the theft she experienced.

Council Member Ekstrom stated she has also had her purse stolen and her accounts cleaned out and she offered her condolences to Ms. Sanders. Mayor Berube stated that he is concerned that burglars are becoming more brazen in the community.

7. **DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION TO CONSIDER ENTERING INTO A CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS R§52-4-205(1)(a) REGARDING THE CHARACTER, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL**

Council Member Cevering motioned to enter into a closed meeting to discuss the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual §52-4-205(1)(a). Council Member Stoker seconded the motion.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Ekstrom	aye
Council Member Stoker	aye
Council Member Swanson	aye

The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting recessed at 7:37 pm.

Council Member Swanson motioned to adjourn the closed meeting and reconvene in the City Council meeting. Council Member Stoker seconded the motion.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Ekstrom	aye
Council Member Stoker	aye
Council Member Swanson	aye

The motion passed unanimously.

The City Council meeting reconvened at 10:00 pm.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

Council Member Swanson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Stoker seconded the motion.

Voting on the motion:

Council Member Barker	aye
Council Member Cevering	aye
Council Member Ekstrom	aye
Council Member Stoker	aye
Council Member Swanson	aye

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.


S. Neal Berube, Mayor


Susan Nance, CMC
Interim City Recorder


Date Approved