

**NORTH OGDEN CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES**

August 3, 2021

The North Ogden City Council convened on August 3, 2021, at 6:06 p.m. at the North View Senior Center at 485 East 2550 North and also electronically at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88309187806> or by Telephone: US: +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 312 626 6799 or YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCriqbePBxTucXEzRr6fclhQ/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 July 29, 2021. 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	(excused)
STAFF PRESENT:	Jon Call	City Manager/Attorney	
	Susan Nance	City Recorder	
	Jami Jones	Finance Director	
	Dirk Quinney	Chief of Police	
	Clark Crowther	Lieutenant	
VISITORS:	Susan Kilborn	Jerry Roest	Jay D Dalpias
	Ivan Barker	Sharon Eva	Linda Webber
	John Arrington	Spencer Stephens	Brenda Ashdown
	Glenn Donnelson	Michael Kincanon	Brett Hamblin
	Noel Schvaneveldt	Margaret Schvaneveldt	Deborah Grusheow
	Robert D. Buswell	Lisa Morby	Drew Morby
	Merrill Sunderland	David Haddock	Randy Winn
	Stefanie Casey	Chris O'Neill	Jeanette Sweet
	Brian Soloman	Robert Bolar	

Mayor Berube called the meeting to order. Robert Bolar offered the invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## ACTIVE AGENDA

### 1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deborah Grusheow, North Ogden Resident, expressed disappointment that the meeting was advertised to begin at 6:00 p.m., but it did not begin until 6:06 p.m. Mayor Berube noted there were some technical difficulties that delayed the start time of the meeting. Ms. Grusheow stated that may be the case, but the elected officials should have been sitting in their seats ready to begin by 6:00 p.m.

### 2. TRUTH IN TAXATION PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON MAINTAINING THE PROPERTY TAX RATE

Prior to opening the public hearing, Mayor Berube used the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the Truth in Taxation process and historical values/taxes for North Ogden residences. From 2010 to 2020, the average home value in North Ogden has increased by 58 percent, the average taxes paid to Weber County have increase by 22 percent, and the average taxes paid to North Ogden have increased 18 percent. The growth of home values has far outpaced growth in tax revenue to both Weber County and North Ogden City. He provided a pie chart illustrating the breakdown of taxes paid by North Ogden residents; the amount that North Ogden receives is approximately 10 percent of a resident's total tax bill. The largest portion, 49 percent, goes to the Weber School District; the second largest portion, 24 percent, is diverted to Weber County; and the remainder is divided among other taxing entities. He presented a sample tax notice to illustrate the increase in market values in Weber County; the increase in market value is the main reason that a resident's property tax bill increases from year to year. If the City does not maintain or increase its property tax rate from year to year, it will be the amount adjusted downward. This means the City is not able to capture increased revenues associated with inflation of property values. This year, the City is considering maintaining the same tax rate from 2020, which was .001180, in order to capture the revenue associated with increased property values. The average home in North Ogden increased in value by 18.23 percent, which means that the City will receive approximately 18 percent more in property tax revenue if the action is taken to maintain the rate. The Council adopted an ordinance earlier this year to govern the use of property tax revenue; highlights of the ordinance are as follows:

- During each budget year the Council will review public safety needs.
- Property Tax can only be spent on public safety needs (currently the City only collects enough property tax revenue to cover approximately 50 percent of public safety needs).
- If Property Tax ever exceeds public safety needs, Property Tax shall be reduced.

Current Public Safety needs include the following:

- Additional Officer

- Full Time Victims Advocate
- Equipment and Vehicles

He then provided the following breakdown of property tax revenues and expenses:

Revenues:

- 2020 Property Tax Collected \$1,479,189.
- 2021 Property Tax to be Collected \$1,795,970.
  - \$88,100 from new homes and businesses.
  - \$228,680 from existing homes and businesses.
- \$316,781 new revenue

Expenses:

- Police Salaries/Benefits - \$330,400.
  - Raises, new officer and FT victim advocate.
- Motor pool Increase for new vehicle - \$16,000.
- Strike Force - \$19,000.
- New Officer Equipment - \$20,000.
- \$385,400 additional Public Safety Expenditures

The increases in staffing in the Police Department are a direct response to growth in the City; the national standard is between 2.2 and 2.5 officers per every thousand residents, but North Ogden has maintained the ratio of 1 officer per every 1,000 residents. In addition to direct staffing costs, the City must purchase equipment and provide facilities that keep the officers safe and allow them to work in the most efficient manner. He concluded that the total Police Department budget in the FY2021 budget is approximately \$2.9 million; even with the property tax increase, which will increase property tax revenues to \$1.8 million, the City will not collect enough to entirely fund the Police Department. However, the City wants residents to understand it is committed to utilize property tax revenues for public safety needs.

**Mayor Berube opened the Public Hearing at: 6:32 p.m.**

Michael Kincanon, North Ogden resident, stated that he is not trying to diminish the information provided by Mayor Berube, but he noted that the inflation in home values do not coincide with the amount of income those on a fixed income received from month to month. He stated that he is unsure how many residents in North Ogden are retirees, but speaking for himself, he is on a fixed income, and he will be lucky to receive a six percent increase in his annual retirement this year. He understands he could sell his home for the inflated value, but he would not be able to buy another home because of skyrocketing costs. He stated that the proposal that Mayor Berube presented is likely fully justifiable, but it is important for the Council to keep in mind that those who will be paying their property tax bill are not in a financial situation to pay increased taxes.

Brett Hamblin, North Ogden resident, stated he has closely followed the actions of the City Council over the years and as much as he hates any kind of tax increase, he understands the need and supports maintaining the tax rate. He asked if the information on his tax statement reflects the proposed increase in taxes as well as the increase in his property value, to which Mayor Berube answered yes.

Meg Sanders, North Ogden resident, stated that North Ogden has ‘Cadillac taste’ and residents want the best of everything. The City wants flowers along Washington Boulevard, an Aquatic Center, an Amphitheater, and it needs a Public Safety facility. It is necessary to pay for those wants. If people do not want their property taxes to increase, they can communicate that in the upcoming election. She encouraged residents to reach out to candidates to learn their position on commercial/residential growth and property tax rates. And, if residents are truly opposed to property tax increases, they need to adjust their expectations and wants

Bob Buswell, North Ogden resident, asked how much Police Officers’ salaries will increase if the property tax increase is approved. Mayor Berube stated that the Council has not approved a new wage scale for Police Officers and will not take action on that until after they make a decision on the property tax rate; however, the amount expected to be proposed is approximately \$196,000 for increases in Police salaries and benefits, which includes a retirement contribution and health coverage.

Deborah Grusheow, North Ogden resident, stated that it is her opinion that all first responders should be paid more than they are paid. She then referred to the pie chart included in Mayor Berube’s presentation and inquired as to how the breakdown of property tax revenues to each taxing entity is decided. Mayor Berube stated that each entity submits their desired tax rate to Weber County on an annual basis; the percentages can fluctuate from year to year depending on each entity’s certified tax rate. Ms. Grusheow stated that she has nothing against education, but she does not have any children in school, and she feels that their share of a resident’s property tax bill could be reduced by even five percent to allow the City to increase Police Officer salaries by that amount. Mayor Berube stated that the City Council heard from the School District’s Superintendent during their last meeting about a proposal to issue a new bond this year to complete three new building projects and to rebuild an old school in the district. Ms. Grusheow stated the District will always claim overcrowding of schools as a result of population growth, but the same should be true for the City as it tries to increase the staffing levels in the Police Department responsive to growth. She suggested that the amount diverted to the School District be reduced so that the amount that goes to the City can be increased.

Mayor Berube stated that he understands the concerns expressed and also noted that he is on a fixed income, and he does not expect his income to increase at the same rate that property taxes are being increased. He then noted, however, that he has always been perplexed by the amount of money that schoolteachers and first responders are paid, but yet people are willing to spend \$20 to \$30 million per year on something that provides

entertainment for us. He concluded each taxing entity sets their own property tax rate based upon their needs in terms of revenues and the City only has influence over its own tax rate.

Jeanette Sweet, North Ogden resident, echoed the comments made by Ms. Sanders regarding needs versus wants for the City. She agreed that schoolteachers and first responders should be paid more; crime is going to increase as a result of growth and the residents need to be able to rely upon the Police Department to respond accordingly. When it comes to luxury items, such as the amphitheater and the flower planters along Washington Boulevard, those should not be considered as needs and should be cut back in times that the City must respond to needs, such as properly funding first responders. The City's needs and wants should be reassessed every year. The same is true for the School District; educators need to be paid fairly, but new schools do not need all the 'bells and whistles' that are commonly included in new construction projects.

Margaret Swain, North Ogden resident, asked if the City employs any part time Police Officers or if they are all full time; she wondered if it is an option to employ part time Officers to keep salaries lower.

Mayor Berube stated that all sworn officers are employed full time. Chief Quinney stated that is correct. Mayor Berube stated that the amount of training that each Officer must obtain warrants a full-time position. He then addressed Ms. Sweet's comments and indicated in the past, the community had a very vibrant community watch program and that helped to supplement the Police Department. Additionally, the City participates in the Volunteers in Policing (VIP) program to augment their Department, but all sworn officer are full time.

Glenn Donnelson, North Ogden resident, stated that he has son who works at the jail and is also a part time Officer for Pleasant View City; he is fully trained and POST certified, but a part time position worked for his circumstances.

Chief Quinney stated there are many smaller jurisdictions that can utilize part time employees and still operate a fully functional Police Department. These Departments typically pay for the training for part time Officers, but the turnover in part time positions is nearly ten-fold the turnover in full time positions. If he had a smaller Department and was experiencing coverage issues, he would pursue part time positions to provide that coverage, but for the current makeup of the Department, part time positions would be more problematic.

Ms. Swain reapproached and inquired as to the possibility of bringing retired Officers back to the City in part time status; this type of scenario could be utilized to decrease overtime costs for full time Officers.

Chief Quinney stated that it is hard to get part time employees to commit to a defined work schedule, particularly for undesirable shifts, such as graveyards.

Linda Webber, North Ogden resident, thanked all Public Safety employees for the service they provide the community. She feels so safe living in this community, especially when she reads stories about things that are happening in other communities.

Ivan Barker, North Ogden resident, stated he has lived in the City for 72 years and is also on a fixed income. He stated that the City has cited an increase in wages in other jurisdictions, such as Salt Lake City, that have caused market issues that the City needs to respond to. However, if Salt Lake pays their officers \$4.00 to \$5.00 more per hour and a North Ogden Officer chooses to move there, they will spend half of that pay increase on gas for their daily commute, or if they move their housing costs will be much higher. He stated that he feels it is justified for North Ogden to pay a bit less as Officers who live in North Ogden likely have a lower cost of living and they are working in a safer jurisdiction. He stated he can support a \$2.00 to \$3.00 per hour pay increase, but not \$4.00 or \$5.00.

Mayor Berube stated that when he used to commute to Salt Lake City, he noticed Police Officers also commuting, but in a police vehicle owned by the Department. He then added that Salt Lake is not the only jurisdiction increasing wages; another city, like Riverdale for example, may increase their wages to try to keep pace with Salt Lake, and Riverdale is much closer than Salt Lake for North Ogden Officers. He added that he strives to be fiscally conservative, but he does not feel it is appropriate to ask Police Officers to come to work every day and put their life on the line for \$22.00 per hour. He struggles with that, and maybe it is because the Ogden City Officer who recently lost his life in the line of duty was previously employed at the company he worked for; he was just doing his job and responding to a call, and someone chose to shoot at him through the door. He stated he understands Mr. Barker's position, but he does not agree with it.

Stefanie Casey, North Ogden resident, thanked the Mayor for providing a thorough and detailed presentation. She truly believes the City needs to take care of its Police Officers; while she knows that it is difficult given the current condition of the economy, it must be done. The City has taken care of many wants in the past, but now is the time to truly look at the community's needs. The fact that the Department is operating in an outdated building that was built in the 1960's is unacceptable and now is the time for the City to take care of them.

Sharon Eva, North Ogden resident, stated that she feels the \$13.38 increase in the amount of property taxes each household will pay to the City is only equivalent to two meals at a restaurant; she feels the proposal is good and people can forego two restaurant meals or a few movie tickets in order to pay that increase.

Mayor Berube thanked those who provided input tonight. He indicated the Council will not make a final decision on the certified tax rate or budget tonight; that action will be considered during the August 17 meeting.

**Council Member Stoker motioned to close the public hearing. Council Member Cevering seconded the motion.**

**Voting on the motion:**

<b>Council Member Barker</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Cevering</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Ekstrom</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Stoker</b>	<b>aye</b>

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**The Public hearing was closed at 6:58 p.m.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jeanette Sweet, North Ogden resident, stated that she formerly worked in the emergency management field and when the Washington Terrace tornado occurred, all local agencies responded. This backed up the 9-1-1 system for four hours and many cities were concerned about responding because the costs they would incur and possibly not be reimbursed for. Additionally, when there was a large fire on the hillside in Pleasant View, it took three agencies responding to get the fire out and protect the mountain and surrounding properties. Part of the travel that the Mayor may have observed as he was commuting to and from Salt Lake could very well be a result of mutual aid and interaction between different communities. Additionally, many agencies participate in joint training opportunities that help them better work together in times of emergency. North Ogden will only continue to grow, and the City has the responsibility to appropriately fund public safety. Her father suffered a heart attack and if it were not for a fast response from public safety officials, he may not have survived. If there is a Police Officer on vacation, it is necessary to have sufficient staff to provide adequate coverage for the City.

Brenda Ashdown, North Ogden resident, stated she has two concerns; if an Officer is only being paid \$20 per hour, they cannot afford to buy a home in North Ogden. She is not sure that pursuing part time Officers based on the assumption that they need less training and can be paid less is the best thing for the City to do either.

Mayor Berube stated he did not intend to instill fear in the minds of citizens and use that fear to justify the proposal to increase property taxes. If any resident in attendance tonight did not feel comfortable making comments, they can reach out to himself, any member of the Council, or City staff.

4. **COUNCIL/MAYOR/STAFF COMMENTS**

Council Member Ekstrom referenced the pie chart included in Mayor Berube's presentation and noted that the amount of money that the Weber School District receives is not used to pay teacher salaries; rather, it is the amount of money the District uses to fund its budget. Teachers are actually paid with State funding and if residents want teachers to be paid more, they need to address the State Legislature. The District funding should be used mainly for facilities. She agreed that some new schools that are built include wasted space and things that are not truly a necessity. She encouraged concerned residents to approach the District and ask for adjusted building plans. She then noted that if residents are concerned about the increase in their property value, they can file an appeal with Weber County and ask them to reconsider the assigned value.

Mayor Berube stated that his assessed value is actually \$140,000 less than the true value and he suggested that any resident truly research the value of their home before proceeding with the appeal process. He then noted the proposed tax increase has nothing to do with the proposed construction of a new Public Safety Facility. This year the Council challenged City Department Heads to be conservative in their budget management to generate sufficient funds to pay debt service on a general obligation bond.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member Stoker motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Ekstrom seconded the motion.**

**Voting on the motion:**

<b>Council Member Barker</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Covering</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Ekstrom</b>	<b>aye</b>
<b>Council Member Stoker</b>	<b>aye</b>

**The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.**



  
S. Neal Berube, Mayor

  
Susan L. Nance, CMC  
City Recorder

  
Date Approved