

AMERICAN FORK CITY COUNCIL
OCTOBER 27, 2021
WORK SESSION MINUTES

Members Present:

Bradley J. Frost	Mayor
Kevin Barnes	Council Member
Ryan Hunter	Council Member
Rob Shelton	Council Member
Clark Taylor	Council Member

Members Absent:

Staci Carroll	Council Member
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Staff Present:

David Bunker	City Administrator
Camden Bird	Community Services Director
Terilyn Lurker	City Recorder
George Schade	IT Director
Derric Rykert	Parks and Recreation Director
Cameron Paul	Police Chief

Also present: Rob Smith, Shane Farnsworth, Cam Larsen, Analis Ruiz, Amber Bonner, Julie King, David Stephensen, Kimberly, John Patten, Sara Hacken, Mark Clement, Sarah Beeson, Ada Wilson

WORK SESSION

The purpose of City Work Sessions is to prepare the City Council for upcoming agenda items on future City Council Meetings. The Work Session is not an action item meeting. No one attending the meeting should rely on any discussion or any perceived consensus as action or authorization. These come only from the City Council Meeting.

The American Fork City Council met in a work session on Tuesday, October 27, 2021, in the Historic City Hall, located at 31 North Church Street, commencing at 7:35 a.m.

1. Discussion with Alpine School District on expansion, development, and impacts on the community.

Mayor Frost welcomed everyone and members introduced themselves.

Alpine Board of Education Member Rob Smith went over numbers for the schools in American Fork from the Alpine School District. American Fork High School has about 2500 students. They have over one hundred teachers and he said it's interesting to think about how many professionals are working every day to connect with kids and support parents and their children's education. American Fork Junior High is the largest junior/middle school with nearly 2000 students. There are five elementary schools. He mentioned he's pleased with Greenwood and how it's turned out. They have just under 7700 students in American Fork as of this fall count. (Official fall count is October 1 of every year.)

Over the past few years, there has been a lot of investment such as the new American Fork High School sports complex, and he specifically noted they finally have bleachers that are ADA accessible. As a personal anecdote, he said he has a child in a wheelchair and it's a lot easier to get her in the bleachers. Continuing on, Board Member Smith mentioned the Greenwood rebuild/remodel, the addition of a couple of portables, parking, asphalt, roofing, hvac, security, furniture/equipment.

The transportation facility runs 123 buses daily picking up about 10,000 students out of the east transportation facilities and about 13,000 out of the west.

Speaking about accountability for the parents and the elected officials, he stated the graduation rate for American Fork is 95%. Considering the special needs population, he considers 95% "pretty dang good." He noted there are some who won't graduate for a variety of reasons. They can tell you by name at this point who's going to make it and who's probably not going to make it as the window just barely closed. Board Member Smith reiterated 95% is an amazing accomplishment. He explains that American Fork has a strong AP tradition, strong AP offerings and they have 4163 students enrolled in AP classes. The state of Utah's average ACT scores are up, where the national average of ACT scores is down. The average ACT score at American Fork is 22.5 and 35% of the students are in concurrent enrollment.

Board Member Smith spoke about various partnerships they have with the City. He stated water conservation has been a big issue; He's met with David Bunker and Mayor Frost and said they told him they were worried about water, and asked if they could conserve a little bit this year so as to help out next year. He said that when the City was shutting water off at the cemetery, they were shutting water off at the schools. Ms. Kimberly Bird and her team worked on water conservation and saved millions of gallons of water. He thanked the City for letting them be a part of that to support the City and that committee with those conservation efforts.

Board Member Mark Clement started by saying that he would be remiss if he ever came to a meeting and didn't talk about impact fees. Clement mentioned a legislative session is coming up. A few years ago the legislature passed a bill that forbade school districts from participating in impact fees with cities. He said he thought the legislature would be pushing that again this year. It doesn't affect American Fork as much because they don't have as much growth as areas out west, but would make a huge difference to the district if those people who need to have schools built in their area were participating by paying the impact fees as they build new houses. He said they will be mentioning that. He said he believes it would be a great solution for cities like American Fork because they wouldn't be relying on as much bond revenue that would be going to build those schools and it would be a little fairer. He said it's been on his radar. To close, he said he appreciated meeting with them, getting to know them, and he said they love these meetings because they can put a face with the name as they discuss important common interests.

Alpine School Board Member Sarah Beeson said she appreciated the efforts of the Council - they are in the process of getting a crossing guard by Barratt Elementary School and they appreciate the City councilmen for their efforts there. They are grateful to work with good people who care about the kids in the community. She said she has a good relationship with Mayor Frost and she appreciates his support and showing up to their graduations. She thanked the mayor and council members for their support of the Alpine School District. She said she's happy about the relationship and she hopes it continues.

Alpine School Board Superintendent Shane Farnsworth started by saying he appreciates all the board members and their commitment to their work, and to the relationships that they have with their municipalities – they serve students across several municipalities and the City board member/City staff relationships are important to them and he appreciates them taking the time. He wanted to share a couple of things: they are in the process of building out a little bit more at the old Walmart facility, and he said he'll let Kimberly Bird who oversees operations and term relations talk a little bit more about the timing of that so they can bring Polaris High School to that facility. After she shared that, he would follow up with thoughts he has about where they're at with districts and things they're working on presently.

Ms. Kimberly Bird thanked the Superintendent and also the American Fork Police Department. She mentioned a specific officer that was with them the previous night and said they do a lot for them. The old Walmart building that they are leasing has a couple of alternative high schools there. They are combining and consolidating Polaris and Polaris West into one area under the remodel. They are in the finishing stages. The teachers will move in over Christmas break, and the students will start the next semester - the second semester of the school year - there. The building will also house Summit High School, so combined between those two high schools they will have just over 200 students there. Polaris High School and Summit High School will occupy that area, and then they will also have a little section to the south side of the building which has been empty space that might be housing some smaller district departments.

When asked about a busing system to Polaris, Ms. Kimberly Bird said there was busing last year at Polaris West to that space and now they're just merging the two together. They're renovating the other side so they can separate Summit and Polaris. She said they would be busing and then asked the questioner if they had any concerns. The questioner said they'd like to look at the routing on those streets, as it's getting to be a very busy part of town with a lot of growth in that area and 620 South has been getting pretty busy. She agreed, and said she'd make sure they'd connect. Another follow-up question about the announcement of a new office building that's coming, DOMO is going to take the whole building, so that will free up some space in the Woodbury Complex but that will be filling that right back up with other tenants.

Alpine School District Board Member Ada Wilson related that the tenants of the high schools have been ideal tenants, with no complaints. The two schools have been located in the Vineyard and Orem area. She'd spoken to a friend who'd said they'd been very worried about who the new tenants were going to be, but that the high schools were wonderful. She hoped that the City officials would get to know the students of Summit and Polaris, and explained that the students who attend those schools are those who are not thriving for varied reasons in typical classroom settings. Summit High School is for children who are wards of the state, and who have some very touching stories. She hopes they will get to know the principal of Summit, and Cory Thomas who was the principal at Polaris West. She was also worried about the traffic and drove the area to see what the back roads are if there are back entrances because it gets congested as one exits the freeway. She wants to consider alternate ways to approach that building. She also noted there's a charter school nearby.

Alpine School District Superintendent Shane Farnsworth followed by saying Alpine School District is back face to face, which was the plan with the board of education and the staff. They were hopeful COVID would be further behind them, but they feel fortunate and do appreciate the efforts of the schools. They don't see significant spread from their schools. He stated that the

COVID numbers are as low as they were when they started school and trending down. They appreciate the efforts of their teachers and their staff to keep kids in school and they're pleased with that. He observed that other districts have state protocols they've had to put in practice but Alpine hasn't. When the schools get above 1% (the elementary schools have to have 30 cases) or 2% (if the school is over 1500 students) they send letters to parents encouraging them to take proactive measures. He believes that seems to help bring numbers back down so they don't have to get into forced testing situations. They're pleased with that, but they wish the numbers were lower. They wish the absences were lower. They do have a higher absentee rate this year than they have in past years, which puts an additional burden on teachers to make up for that work and to help students achieve at high levels.

They are not immune to the labor challenges that businesses are facing. They also face a labor shortage; fewer bus drivers, subs, paraprofessionals, nutritional service workers. Everyone is being asked to do more than they typically would. He appreciated the efforts of staff who have gone above and beyond. The substitute shortage is a challenge. If they don't have subs to fill classes they have had to pull aids that usually remediate or support challenged students in their learning to cover classes. They're grateful to Cami Larsen and her leadership and they're working to improve that. People that have been teachers in the past or those that are coming from out of state that have licenses, they're trying to get people through the training faster. They've reduced the training to one hour. They're working to improve the fingerprinting and background check time lag. The fill rate was down to 60% but has been moving to 70-80% the past few weeks and they're hoping to keep increasing. This has been a challenge for them as well as just the general labor shortage. They are still down 20-30 bus drivers. Some schools are doing double routes.

They are in the process of doing a job study where a third party comes in to evaluate wages and job descriptions and placements; that will wrap up and be reviewed shortly so they can hopefully make some changes in salary increases and adjustments to attract more employees to the Alpine School District. They are in the process of a what they call a "listening tour." They completed three listening tours; they have two more. They planned to be at Mountain View and Orem areas as well as the American Fork area. The listening tours are part of the process of a strategic plan they are working on. The listening tours are an opportunity for all the employees to gather together. They send out a feedback survey and they ask the employees to give them feedback on six areas that will likely be a part of their strategic plan. They're in the process of developing a strategic plan to present to the board of education in January. They will refine the plan the rest of the year to put it into practice next year. The employees can share what is on their mind in terms of the strategic plan; they then open it up to comments from the teachers on how they can better support them in their classes and in their schools.

They believe that as a Board of Education, as a senior leadership team, learning happens in the classroom and their responsibility is to provide strong classroom support, so the teachers have tools, resources, and expertise to do their jobs well. They want Principals to have the resources to support teachers in doing that work. In November, they will have the PTAs and councils to gather as clusters, somewhere between 150-200 parents per meeting and will go through the same process, getting the feedback from them in the development of that strategic plan. He reiterated his appreciation for their relationship with American Fork City.

Superintendent Farnsworth then explained the work done on Caveman Boulevard was much less intrusive than anticipated and they appreciated the work. They moved the schedule this year to a standardized schedule so everyone meets at the same time. They did that because the teachers

needed more time. They have introduced additional literacy training because they were not happy with where their reading scores are and needed to improve that. They made a concentrated effort to do that which means additional time was required. The schedule structure changed, which led to a common start time which makes more parents dropping off their students in a limited window. He noted that he lives close to Shelley Elementary School and knows there are certain times that are good to leave and certain times that are not good to leave, and adjusts accordingly. He understands the frustration that puts on the City, and complaints that the City gets about traffic though it's because of the schools. He believes that has died down a bit, but expects that the frustration level will increase as the weather deteriorates in the winter.

Superintendent Farnsworth asked if there were any questions about what's going on in the district and if there's anything they'd like to be aware of. The Mayor asked how the district compared size wise relative to other districts in the state. Farnsworth said the conferences that they're in are in the FCC of high schools because of Sky Ridge, Lone Peak, Pleasant Grove, and American Fork. Superintendent Farnsworth explained the size of the schools. He thought American Fork and Lone Peak were about 100 students apart. Cedar Valley and Westlake are growing rapidly. Alpine School District is probably the third largest in the state.

Dr. John Patten explained they had principal meetings last week. The principal of Forbes Elementary School, Travis Procter, stated the plan was remarkable because of how the community adapted to the road construction that was done this year. They started a *Walk a Block* campaign around Forbes and designated areas where students could be dropped off and then walk the remaining distance to the school. The City gave them a crossing guard, which was a very effective hire. Now the street has been finished, he believed the traffic was faster and parents are coming later which was leading to more congestion. They have more students arriving late now and they are more worried about safety than they were before. They are going to try to reinforce the *Walk a Block* because it worked really well in what was an unfortunate situation. Now that they're back to normal they don't want to "go back to normal."

Council Member Rob Shelton started by saying he loves coming to the meetings and talking and loves the partnership with the school district. He asked what the top two things the district would be could use from the City.

Ms. Kimberly Bird said they want the City to be aware that they'll be going for bond in 2022.

Alpine School District Board Member Mark Clement explained they didn't go for a bond in 2020 because of COVID. In the last couple of years they have tried many crazy things to make ends meet and believes it's important now to try and make this bond happen. They appreciate American Fork's support of the schools.

Alpine School District School Board Member Rob Smith has been working to refinance bonds at lower rates to save tens of millions of dollars, and the efforts are going to be to try and keep the property tax rates the same.

Alpine School District Superintendent Shane Farnsworth said he thought they have one of the best relationships with American Fork and he would ask they continue being committed to the principles that lead to that relationship, continuing to assume goodwill in the serving of their patrons. The second request he has is to have open dialogue with each other and to understand

that issues are complex and challenging, but if they don't talk about them they become more challenging and more complex.

Council Member Rob Shelton pointed out the district has AAA bond rating. He loves the partnership with the district regarding recreation. He liked how they have standardized things from a business standpoint for renting out facilities and fees. He thinks it's added a lot to their financial position and admires it quite a bit. Shelton stated the success of RDAs is part of the impact fees brought up and financing growth. They have studied a couple of RDAs over the last six years and think it is a great opportunity. He wanted to know the school district's side on RDAs, CRAs, and getting some sense of their feelings on that as they continue working on their relationship.

Mayor Bradley Frost explained their FrontRunner was one of the highest utilized stations. There is a lot happening around that station, and has one of the highest ridership of the entire FrontRunner system. They have some plans that include higher densities right next to the station. He doesn't believe there's going to be a lot of single-family housing growth in that area. Even with the impact fees there is an incredible amount of capital needed to get started to front that project.

Alpine School District Board Member Amber Bonner followed up on Council Member Rob Shelton's question about RDAs. She said RDAs are difficult from the School Board's perspective because as a school district they don't collect impact fees and have no other fees from new growth. The students show up before funding before the funding shows up. With a lot of new growth, it was difficult to promise to give back a certain amount of money before they receive it. She believes that's why there's a lot of board members who do not love RDAs. However, they recognize they do have an impact on the financial wellbeing, stability and need to be partners to make that area successful. They're difficult from a school board perspective because property tax is the only new revenue they get from new growth. The concern is if they give it back with more students showing up, there is no additional funding. The school board looks for other ways to receive support. Tyson Foods gave them property for an elementary school, so they find themselves going back to those sorts of requests. They don't tend to see a lot of students from the one- and two-bedroom types of housing, it's generally more from the single family homes. They wrestle with the desire to support their cities, but at the same time their mandate is education - the kids are coming but the resources aren't, which is a difficult conundrum.

Council Member Rob Shelton acknowledged he can see that and that they need to look at the win-win opportunities and asked what the City could do from that standpoint so it's not a one-sided proposal.

Alpine School District Board Member Amber Bonner replied that other businesses have been huge donors. Facebook has been one of their largest donors, especially in technological support.

Alpine School District Member Rob Smith stated the partnership with Micron and IM Flash has been a true win. Smith thinks the board members are reluctant economic developers - his term - and he says they understand their role in that. He believes Alpine School District Member Amber Bonner has articulated the dynamics they face. They understand that they may not necessarily want to be in the economic development business but they are by nature of the property tax. They have considered the possibility of CRAs. That's a primary driver of finance, improvements especially in areas where there is little or no infrastructure. Alpine School District Member Smith mentioned Project Fremont, where the board worked with the City and the developer on payments to their foundation. They can be creative to a point. The struggle is that some members of the District don't

believe they should be involved in the business of RDAs. What is important to the City is important to them and they are trying to find ways where they can work together successfully to benefit the taxpayers: the transportation, the infrastructure, the families. He says it's hard because of competing missions.

Council Member Rob Shelton expressed the growth they have seen and what was projected to continue to come, is sometimes mind blowing. They are getting to a critical point of deciding how to fix 200 South but they need to maximize a partnership. He asked if there was a timeline where they saw it working. Alpine School District Member Rob Smith answered they have an initial draft and the board asked for additional information and once provided it will go back to the board. They like to put things on board agendas that are going to be successful. Once agreed upon, they work on the agreements; it could be 60-90 days. The school board likes to be the last one to look at the agreement as they have the most skin in the game from the property tax perspective.

Ms. Kimberly Bird said the next capital meeting is on November 16th for work to be done prior to their next meeting.

Alpine School District Board Member Sarah Beeson switched gears and observed that because of COVID, the school board meetings have been at the district offices. She acknowledged that it put an additional strain on the police officers, so she wanted to thank the American Fork Police and Emergency Services for their support. She acknowledged that it's been a little rocky and she asked for forgiveness and asked for their patience as they are trying to find the right balance of being respectful. They totally welcome and want public feedback. They value their parents and their feedback. She feels like it's been pretty smooth with Alpine, with some little rocky roads, but they're trying to be very careful. She asked the Chief to express their appreciation to the department for keeping them safe during these precarious times.

American Fork City Council Member Clark Taylor mentioned internally one the biggest focuses for the City is 200 South and the area around that. Council Member Clark Taylor agreed they understand the difficulty with stretching dollars. He observed that driving down 200 South is an adventure, and this could be a good starting place to get something official.

Mayor Brad Frost closed with how much he appreciated this meeting. He observed that they share everything - people, taxpayer dollars - with the district and felt they should do this yearly. He will strongly suggest this happens yearly. He thanked them for coming together.

2. Adjourn.

The work session ended at 8:37 a.m.



Terilyn Lurker, City Recorder