

RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

AUGUST 15, 2024

The regular meeting of the Richmond City Council was held at the Park Community Center located at 90 South 100 West, Richmond, Utah on Thursday, August 15, 2024. The meeting began at 6:30 P.M.; Mayor Paul Erickson was in the chair. The opening remarks were made by Amber Ervin.

The following Council Members were in attendance: Lyle Bair, Amber Ervin, Bryce Wood, Joel Draxler and Daryl Black.

City Administrator HollyJo Karren, Karyn Tejan, City Engineer Weston Bellon and City Recorder Justin Lewis were also in attendance.

VISITORS: Walt Tejan, Cindy Smith, Terrie Wierenga, Alia Mecham, Jay Bair, Scott Wells

APPROVAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 18, 2024.

A motion to approve the July 18, 2024 city council meeting minutes was made by Bryce, seconded by Amber and the vote was unanimous.

Yes Vote: Bair, Ervin, Draxler, Wood, Black

No Vote: None

PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAX REVENUE FOR THE CITY. THE RICHMOND CITY TAX ON A \$448,000 RESIDENCE WOULD INCREASE FROM \$264.88 TO \$273.50, WHICH IS \$8.62 PER YEAR. THE RICHMOND CITY TAX ON A \$448,000 BUSINESS WOULD INCREASE FROM \$481.60 TO \$497.28, WHICH IS \$15.68 PER YEAR. IF APPROVED THE CITY WOULD INCREASE ITS PROPERTY TAX REVENUE BY 3.35% ABOVE LAST YEAR'S PROPERTY TAX BUDGETED REVENUE EXCLUDING ELIGIBLE NEW GROWTH.

MAYOR: I have asked Justin to provide some information on this request before we open the public hearing.

JUSTIN: In 2018, the council raised the property tax rate for the first time since approximately 1978. It was a large increase of \$77.23 per year. Since that time, the council has chosen to make small incremental increases rather than a large increase. By holding the same property tax rate year after year, it has allowed us to do this. Last year, the increase was 3.35% or \$9.07 for the average household. This year, the proposal is 3.35% or \$8.62 per year or \$0.72 per month. By doing these small increases we have avoided large increases the last few years. If the city holds the same rate as last year the revenue received by the city would be \$349,256. If the city doesn't hold the same rate in place we would receive \$338,243. By keeping the same rate in place, the city will receive an additional \$11,013. Nine cities or towns in Cache Valley are proposing a property tax rate change this year. We are the lowest request at \$8.62 per year and Clarkston is the highest at \$121.98.

A motion to close the regular council meeting and open the public hearing was made by Lyle, seconded by Bryce and the vote was unanimous.

Yes Vote: Bair, Ervin, Draxler, Wood, Black

No Vote: None

The public hearing opened at 6:37 P.M.

TERRIE WIERENGA: I am retired and on a fixed income. I understand the concept behind holding the same rate. What are your plans for this additional funding? What is the cost of advertising? If the cost of advertising is a couple of thousand dollars and your new revenue is only \$11,000 you might consider holding the rate every other year. Recently a full-time employee left the city. What are your plans in regard to that position?

A motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular city council meeting was made by Bryce, seconded by Lyle and the vote was unanimous.

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Yes Vote: Bair, Ervin, Draxler, Wood, Black

No Vote: None

The public hearing was closed at 6:39 P.M.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON RESOLUTION 2024-07, A RESOLUTION SETTING THE REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX RATE.

MAYOR: Justin, what is the cost of advertising?

JUSTIN: Where we team up with other entities in the valley and the county includes the information on the property tax notices, I would anticipate the cost to for sure be under \$1,000 and closer to around \$500.

MAYOR: Inflation is around the 3.35% increase we are requesting. Rob Bair is going to retire later this year. How long has he been with the city?

HOLLY: Around 34 years.

MAYOR: A few years ago, our annual payroll was around \$350,000. This year it will be about \$750,000. We receive most of our revenue from sales tax. Of the seven cents collected in sales tax; we receive 1/7 or 14.29%. Rob's replacement will cost at least \$25.00 per hour to find someone who is qualified. Black & White Days is costing more each year. We receive about \$160,000 in Class "C" Road funds each year and that is what we spend on our roads. We have a lot of time and upkeep spent on our parks to keep them nice. We have the White Pine Park which is being more utilized. We have expanded the main park and recently added a pavilion and restroom facility.

HOLLY: Benefit costs are increasing. Fertilizer and other products for the parks have really increased. We have more employees than in the past. This year we hired one more temporary employee for the summer months to help in the parks. We are growing and expanding.

MAYOR: It costs around \$100,000 a month to run the sewer plant. We have been talking for the last three months or so about ways to improve and expand the sewer system. We are trying to determine if we can sell Lewiston City any of our excess capacity. The property tax funds stay in the General Fund. We have two enterprise funds and that revenue cannot go into there. We have more staff members than in the past. Inflation has been in the range of four to nine percent. The costs to operate The Park Bench are increasing. To properly maintain the Cub River Sports Complex additional funds are needed. The difference between an additional \$11,000 and \$77,000 per year is significant. It was very hard to implement that large increase in 2018. Dollar Tree is coming which will add more sales tax revenue. We have more eateries than in the past and they collect sales tax.

TERRIE WIERENGA: Sales tax is such a variable and very volatile where it can bottom out. It will require cuts when it significantly drops.

MAYOR: We have a contingency plan in place if that happens.

JOEL: I prefer these small increases. I remember 2018. It was hard and shocking on my family's budget to see such a large increase. I was reviewing my personal expenses and how much they have increased. For groceries, gas and other items I have seen a 27% increase. I much prefer an increase of 3.35% over an increase in groceries of 25%.

AMBER: Several community members have reached out to me on this request. It is hard to add a cost increase. The cost of medication is really increasing. We have certain things we must have in the city. There are many unknown costs as well. We appreciate the budget we have. Another city chose to not adjust their rate and in turn let go of all of their crossing guards. We have to decide what we care about. I appreciate 3% and not a large increase. The staff is very conscience about what they spend.

BRYCE: My brother is on the Wellsville city council and they had a very contentious meeting in this regard. There were some hard feelings at that meeting. The meeting became personal. I like the smaller increases. I am glad there are no hard feelings at this meeting.

MAYOR: If our revenue substantially decreased, we would stop any large projects we are working on or planning for. Some areas would be maintained less meaning rather than mow the grass weekly we would do it every other week. All new sidewalk projects would be put on hold. I cannot believe a city would cut their crossing guards; it makes no sense. We must be responsible in what we do.

A motion to adopt Resolution 2024-07, a Resolution setting the Real and Personal Property Tax Rate was made by Daryl, seconded by Lyle and the vote was unanimous.

Yes Vote: Bair, Ervin, Draxler, Wood, Black

No Vote: None

STAFF REPORTS AND MONTHLY FINANCIAL REVIEW.

WESTON: I will provide a master plan update. We are working on a sewer treatment plan which is looking at ways to increase capacity. We are looking at what to do and how to optimize things. We are trying to determine if we keep the plant as-is or expand the existing footprint. We are also looking at when to expand the plant in the long term. We are looking at the sewer ponds to see how we can better utilize them. Land application is also something we are considering. We want to delay a massive expansion of the plant as long as possible. We met with previous mayors Kip Panter and Mike Hall to review the history of the sewer system. We learned a lot about the past history and the discussions which were held with the state on the system. It was very fortunate the city was able to convince the state to allow the city to keep the ponds in place.

MAYOR: To do a massive expansion of the plant would be around \$25,000,000 and we cannot afford that.

WESTON: We are also working on water master plan and sewer collection plan. We flowed some of the fire hydrants to get some measurements. They are used to help calibrate the water plan. Modeling for the sewer plan has been completed. The Transportation Master Plan will start at the end of this month.

HOLLY: Josie DeMann has been hired to work at the front desk here at the office.

MAYOR: She works part-time; correct?

HOLLY: Yes. She filled a vacancy we had. The Park Bench had a medical incident today. Due to Karyn's immediate response the EMT's arrived in just a couple of minutes. Staff responded from the Richmond Fire Station and then members of the Smithfield Fire Department arrived a couple of minutes later. The rot and mold in the Community Building have been removed. The wall has been repaired and will be painted this winter. The projects at the Nature Park have been completed. The dead trees have been removed, brush and garbage cleaned up. The next time Twin "D" comes back to town we will have them jet the drain line one more time.

MAYOR: I see Twin "D" has been in town working.

HOLLY: Yes, they were doing their annual cleaning. In the next newsletter we are going to encourage the residents to visit the Nature Park to see what has been done. Rob and Bryan have overseen that project. We are going to start working on potholes next week. The sweeper goes out once a week. We have it on a regular routine. The Park Bench parking lot will be striped and fog sealed this weekend. Crosswalk painting is currently being done at night by the contractor. The cement apron around the new restroom will be poured on Friday or Monday and then we can open the facility. The asphalt work at 95 East Main is scheduled to be completed next week. The last section of our sidewalk projects for this year at 470 South in Hill Haven was poured today. The approach on the north end of the Park Community Center has been replaced. Bear River Head Start rents the community building from the city. They only have three children enrolled this year. They have never had this few enrolled. The services they offer are income based. If they don't have higher numbers next year, they will have to close this facility and bus the children to their other facility in Hyde Park. The insulation project in the Park Community Center has started. They are doing the work at night. Representatives from Dollar Tree said the roof of their new building should be installed in November and they hope to be open in February. The foundation for the first set of storage units for Jared Wiser has been poured. Six more water meters were set in the Richmond Village. Three new zoning clearances have been issued. One for a home in The Knolls, Traveller Lane and next to Larry Dunkley's home. The MBR Plant currently has 2,400 plates and 1,600 more can be added. Troy, Shane and Bryan do maintenance and repair work on the plant every Monday and Tuesday.

MAYOR: Weston, please provide an update on the 400 West road project.

WESTON: The water and sewer lines have been installed. There are still a couple of fire hydrants to install. The storm drain system needs to be installed as well. This should be completed by the end of next week. Once this is complete the roadway crews can come in and the project should progress rather quickly. The project should meet its substantial completion date of October 15th.

MAYOR: Inform the council about the cost overruns on the project.

WESTON: A geotechnical engineer was hired before the project started to take some samples. The work at that time showed the ground water was at about seven feet. When the project was started this spring, ground water was found at about one foot. The new road could not be built on the existing base. The old base was removed and new cobble rock and other base material has been installed. This will prevent issues with the new asphalt long term. This is a COG (Council of Governments) sponsored project. The extra costs are around \$100,000 and the city is responsible for eight percent of the cost.

MAYOR: We are hoping the COG will allow us to install a new sidewalk on the highway as part of this project with the leftover funding.

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JUSTIN: The City Party will be held on Friday, September 6th starting at 5pm with free rides and then at 6pm with free dinner. The Park Bench, DUP and others are all involved. We have new rides this year which are being handled by Checketts Amusements. Lowers Foods is handling the meat. We are working with Lee's Marketplace on the rest of the meal. There will also be a couple of surprises this year involving the council and mayor. Our new mass communication software, CivicReady, is ready to go and the first message will go out on Friday from this system. It has a different look and feel than Parlant but still gets the information to the residents via email, text and voicemail. Our new agenda and meeting management software, CivicClerk, should be online for the September council meeting or worst case by October. There are some backend changes they are making that I have requested. This will allow the residents to see all of the packet items the council has as well as see how the council voted and some other items. You will see a lot of IT related expenses in July. This is because we do a lot of software renewals in July which are for the entire fiscal year. We have paid for dog catcher service, \$5,212, for July through December. We have paid for police protection, \$31,462, for July through December as well. We trade in the mini excavator every other year. We received the new mini-x in July at a cost of \$12,850. The two land purchases on 500 North involving the Hill and Buttars families have been completed at a cost of \$18,782. The new bathroom at the park has been installed. The cost for the facility was \$90,418. This project is being paid for with RAPZ tax funding. We collected \$139,464 in Water Impact Fee revenue in July. We collected \$103,376 in Sewer Impact Fee revenue in July. We purchased some new garbage cans at a cost of \$9,946. We budget to purchase some new garbage cans every year. We need some for new homes as well as to replace old, damaged cans.

COUNCIL MEMBER AND MAYOR REPORTS

DARYL: I don't have any new items to report.

MAYOR: How is the irrigation board doing?

DARYL: I was not able to attend this month.

MAYOR: They were able to fix their leak at 300 East Main and the repair was not as bad as they expected.

BRYCE: The youth council is doing well. Next month some of their members will be in attendance and we will recognize their mayor, Alia Mecham. Kassy Greer is doing an amazing job as an adult leader. We need one more adult leader. We are planning a trip to Lagoon, it will be on Saturday, September 21st during Frightmares. We could use some help for that trip.

AMBER: What is needed?

BRYCE: We have 14 who are eligible to attend. We are trying to confirm the number so we can figure out how many vehicles and adults are needed.

JOEL: I was not able to attend this month's planning commission meeting so Amber attended in my behalf. They are discussing multi-family zoning. They had a lengthy discussion which lasted a couple of hours. Some of the items they discussed were density, building height, garbage, and number of required parking stalls. Each commissioner had an assignment to report on.

AMBER: Next month they will be discussing a draft proposal of what they are working on. A lot of time and effort has been put into their discussion. A lot of homework has been done. They have looked at what other cities are doing but will adapt to what is best for us. They are considering a Use Matrix Table which states what is allowed in certain areas.

MAYOR: They are doing this with the intent their proposal will come before the city council for review in October if things go well.

JOEL: We have talked about adding an event coordinator position mainly for the Black & White Days celebration. Black & White Days has grown so much as have some other events. The council cannot handle all of these activities themselves. We asked for applications for the position. Amber, myself and Holly did the interviews. Erin Munson has been selected as the best fit for the job. She is a previous resident who now resides in Franklin. She oversaw Idaho Days in Franklin for a few years. She grew it so much the city council asked her to cut it back because they felt it had grown too much. All three of us think she would do a fantastic job. She would be willing to oversee the entire event. We need to discuss a stipend or wage. We discussed coming up with a defined list of what she would handle to help lower the cost. We all still want to be involved. We don't want to completely hand it over to someone. We do need some help in coordinating it. For example, I still want to oversee the foot and bike races. Amber has overseen the parade but would like to do other things. There are the horse pulls, dairy show, food show and many other events. We are hoping to discuss more with her and come to an agreement of what she would do and how much she would be paid.

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AMBER: She loves to plan parties. I oversaw Black & White Days last year. It takes a lot of time. A person cannot have a full-time job, be a good council member and oversee Black & White Days at the same time. As council members we need to make sure we are focusing on the important things.

DARYL: How much is she expecting to get paid?

AMBER: When we first talked with her, she was expecting nothing but she didn't know what was involved. Idaho Days in Franklin is only one day. Planning for Black & White Days goes on year-round.

MAYOR: I think it would be wise to have her come before the council.

AMBER: She said she would like \$3,000 to \$5,000 if she takes over the entire event. Maybe we just have her oversee things like the parade then I could oversee something else. The cost could be lower based on what we ask her to do.

DARYL: I like the idea of planner especially when they are good at what they do and enjoy it. The cost could be paid for if she finds additional sponsors. I don't know the activities that take up all of the time. I am concerned that we do not micromanage her. If she is going to oversee it, we need to make sure and let her do her job and not micromanage her. She needs to tell us where she needs help not us tell her.

BRYCE: I support getting someone to help it all come together. I have been involved in Idaho Days in the past. We have a lot more events in Black & White Days than they do there.

LYLE: I think we need to talk to representatives from Franklin City to get their take on what happened. I support being more efficient and finding more sponsors.

BRYCE: Is she still overseeing Idaho Days?

AMBER: No. Franklin wanted to keep it small mainly just for the residents and not for outsiders. Black & White Days is different. We have people from all over the country and Canada. She is not afraid to talk to people. She was not afraid to invite and involve more people in Idaho Days and the Franklin City Council did not like that.

HOLLY: They had almost twice the number of vendors there than we have at Black & White Days. They brought in a lot of money. She provided a reference list.

LYLE: We need to follow up with Franklin and understand their side of the story.

JOEL: We need to do our due diligence. I don't spend time in the booths. She talked about understanding how the booths should be set up to maximize the flow and how you don't put competing booths by each other. Where the booths go needs to be very systematic. The Lions Club might want to hold onto overseeing the booths and she would not need to deal with that. We talked about getting the Highland Games more connected.

AMBER: She mentioned using a QR code for events. She has a backbone but is still very adaptable.

The consensus of the council was to proceed in seeing if a deal could be made with Erin Munson to oversee the Black & White Days celebration.

AMBER: At the Park Bench there were 103 lunches served, 19 to-go meals prepared, and 1,100 food pantry items distributed to 126 food pantry visitors. There were 82 volunteer hours and we can always use more volunteers. Karyn and Kassy are amazing. They care. The senior spelling bee will be held on August 23rd. An art show is being held in conjunction with the City Party on September 6th. There will be a Halloween carnival in October. There are many opportunities for people to be involved. There have been over 300 visitors to the Relic Hall since February. The DUP is going to do a raffle at the city party. They are going to raffle a Blackstone grill, Dutch oven, ten quilts and more. The proceeds from the raffle will help pay for a new roof for the Relief Society Building. The city council has a great relationship with the DUP and it has been fun to watch it grow.

LYLE: Weston and Holly covered the items I was going to mention. Austin is doing well with things in water. We want our infrastructure to last as long as possible.

MAYOR: Robert Bair is retiring at the end of the year. We will invite him to attend a council meeting but he doesn't like fanfare. The city employees are busy and always very responsive, especially Holly. She gets stuff done and some of those things are difficult. She makes the community shine. We have applied for a grant to hopefully help pay for a new roof on the Relief Society building. That building needs some help. It has been a long time since any money was spent on that building.

TERRIE WIERENGA: Around 10-15 years ago about \$21,000 was spent with some donated proceeds. The steps were redone, a new computer and printer purchased, a sign installed and some indoor work completed.

MAYOR: The building needs some improvements. On August 24th there will be a city sponsored bike race, the Cache Valley Century. It used to be a fundraiser for Common Ground. Troy Oldham and his wife are the owners of the Cache Gran Fondo. They agreed to help keep the Cache Century race going. It is a city sponsored event. There

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were around 400 riders last year. They are hoping to have that many again this year. We have been talking with representatives from Lewiston City for the last year. They have a sewer problem. Their lagoon system is too small. They use the same engineering firm we do, J-U-B Engineers. Logan City is a regional source for several other cities for sewer treatment. We are considering allowing Lewiston City to hook onto our system but there are some unique challenges. Currently, the cost to operate the MBR Plant is around \$100,000 a month. They need long-term capacity for around 500 homes. We have around 1,000 homes on our system right now. We have discussed the past history of the system with prior mayors. Mayor Hall oversaw the construction of the MBR Plant. Weston, Holly, myself and representatives from Lewiston City are going to go before the water quality board and ask them if they would allow Lewiston City to discharge into our ponds. It would require some modifications to our ponds. We also own a lot of land around the plant and the ponds. We could consider land application. We cannot sell capacity in our plant where it is such a finite resource. We will ask the state if they are open to options regarding our ponds. Lewiston would have to pay for all of the impact and cost. It has been nothing but a preliminary discussion at this point.

JUSTIN: Just a reminder that the September city council meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday, September 26th.

MAYOR: We don't do this often but I am going to accept questions from the audience.

TERRIE: There are a lot of speeders in the new 45 miles per hour zone on the highway south of town.

JOEL: People are still adapting where it is such a big change.

TERRIE: I will take the blame. The discussion started as part of the General Plan and Trails Master Plan updates.

CINDY ALLEN: People need to be warned about the loud horn that goes off at 6am when that bike race starts.

A motion to adjourn was made by Bryce, seconded by Amber, and the vote was unanimous.

Yes Vote: Bair, Ervin, Draxler, Wood, Black

No Vote: None

Adjournment at 7:50 P.M.

RICHMOND CITY CORPORATION

Paul J. Erickson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Justin B. Lewis, City Recorder