

**MINUTES
HARRISVILLE CITY COUNCIL
August 6, 2024
363 West Independence Blvd
Harrisville, UT 84404**

Minutes of a regular Harrisville City Council meeting held on August 6th, 2024 at 7:00 P.M. in the Harrisville City Council Chambers, 363 West Independence Blvd., Harrisville, UT.

Present: Mayor Michelle Tait, Council Member Karen Fawcett, Council Member Grover Wilhelmsen, Council Member Blair Christensen, Council Member Max Jackson, Council Member Steve Weiss.

Excused:

Staff: Jennie Knight, City Administrator, Jack Fogal, City Recorder, Mark Wilson, Chief of Police, Sergeant Alicia Davis.

Visitors: Kathleen Hohosh, Kevin Karras, Jason Hadley, MQ Johnson, Kevin Jensen, Angie Francom, Sherry Farrell, Mike Farrell, Alesa Hofmeister, Roger Colvin, Frances Hood, Steve Hood, Saundra Dinsdale, Ryan Ellis, Curtis Christensen, Roger Price, Joanne Christensen, Jordan Wheelwright.

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Tait called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

2. Opening Ceremony.

Council Member Fawcett opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Business Items

- a. Public Hearing** – to receive input from the public for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy for Harrisville City.

Jennie Knight explained staff has identified three needs for the City. The first is a public relations and website service need. Currently we pay \$1,500 every other year to purchase the domain name for our website. We are looking at revamping our website to make it more transparent and easier to navigate. Staff is looking into proposals for a public relations contract. They range from \$2,000-\$50,000 a month. We will not solicit formal contracts until Council decides this is a priority need. The second need is a code enforcement officer. It is currently being fulfilled by a public works employee. Due to increase in development in the City he is no longer able to cover code enforcement. This employee was not hired for code enforcement but was helping out. Staff is proposing hiring a part time code enforcement officer under the police department. Staff is not recommending taking a proactive code enforcement approach, but responding to complaints. The third is a planning service need. It is currently being split between admin staff and a third party. Due to increases in development in the city staff is recommending hiring a part-time planner. If Council takes no action the current tax rate would be 0.001486. The taxes on a \$416,000 residence would be approximately \$340 a year in property taxes to the City. If we maintain the rate, it would be 0.001500. The taxes on a \$416,000 property would be approximately \$342.38, a \$2.38 increase. The proposed increase would be a rate of 0.001564. The taxes on a \$416,000 property would be approximately \$357.39 a \$17.39 increase. Council Member Fawcett inquired

why not have a pro-active code enforcement approach. Jennie Knight explained we would need more staffing just for code enforcement. We would need a dedicated officer who only does code enforcement plus staff to review and follow up. Council Member Fawcett asked if hiring a part time code enforcement officer would provide quicker response times to complaints. Jennie Knight answered yes, it would. Council Member Wilhelmsen inquired what code they would be enforcing. Jennie Knight explained they would respond to complaints in regards to City code such as; building complaints, nuisance complaints, junk complaints, and other issues addressed in City code. Council Member Christensen asked if this increase would allow us to cover all three needs. Jennie Knight explained no, it would not. The total increase would amount to \$50,000 in increased revenue for the City. Council would have to decide what to spend it on. Council Member Wilhelmsen inquired about the public relations needs. Jennie Knight explained the top priority would be to re-design the website to make it more user friendly. We have received complaints that it is hard to navigate. We could also utilize a public relations service to communicate on social media. This would allow us to send messages to the public and interact on social media. Council Member Jackson inquired if we maintain the current rate, can we still give cost of living raises to staff. Jennie Knight explained yes it would allow cost of living increases. Council Member Wilhelmsen inquired what the scope of the planner would be. Jennie Knight explained the use of a planner helps us to balance development applications against our code and to meet state requirements. The planner would also communicate to people who called inquiring about building in the city; this would include businesses, residents, and developers. The planner would be proactive in trying to bring in new businesses to Harrisville. Council Member Fawcett summarized the position would help to map out the City plan and bring in new businesses. Jennie Knight clarified yes; you are correct as well as keeping us compliant with state laws.

Motion: Council Member Weiss made a motion to open the public hearing to receive input from the public for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy, second by Council Member Fawcett.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes
Council Member Weiss, Yes
Council Member Christensen, Yes
Council Member Jackson, Yes
Council Member Fawcett, Yes

The motion passed unanimously

Kevin Karras explained he is glad he came to the meeting. He is wary of tax increases. He asks that the City Council recognizes the pressure on them. We are in a pattern that money is no issue. If the City does not have enough just hold a truth in taxation and increase rates. How can we use the existing budget without increasing the tax burden. It is well within Council's power to maintain the budget.

Jason Hadley appreciates the information presented and wants his question noted. Why was the information provided tonight not in the packet. Why was the budget decreasing but the tax rate increased. Last year's budget was \$5,900,000 and this year is \$5,400,000. A tax increase is an unneeded burden. Why are you asking for more when you are spending less.

Kevin Jensen appreciates the City Council. Have they looked at all of the options. If you look at the cities in Weber County. We are 12th in population and 15th in area. We are the 4th highest taxed City in the county. If you look at ways to cut taxes the police are the biggest expenditure. There are four cities in the county with bigger populations that do not have a police department. They contract with the Sheriff's department. Farr West paid \$745,000 for services in 2023 and we paid \$2,300,000 for our police department. Have we looked at all the options. Is it the best decision to keep our police department.

Curtis Christensen has similar concerns to Kevin Jensen. Our biggest budget item is an expense that could be shared with larger entities. We lose some control but we save money. A few years ago, a meeting was held with the current sheriff and the City decided to keep the police department. If we can save \$100,000 you need to look at that. You need to be willing to relinquish control. The force has done a lot of good things but it is time to move on to something else. We are one of the highest taxed entities in the county we need to look at ways to cut costs.

Kathleen Hohosh has been a resident for 20 years. One of her concerns is that new residents are not having their taxes increased, only old residents are having their taxes increased. Why are residents who are currently living here being punished. She wants to know the state bills mentioned so she can research it herself. North View Fire just did a tax increase. She has a fixed income and with her increasing property values she feels they are being taxed out of their homes. She has nothing against the police department and supports them. Her granddaughter was almost abducted in Plain City last month. She believes having a city department is better than utilizing the sheriff's office. Nothing has been done about the attempted abduction because the sheriff's department did not respond fast enough.

Ryan Ellis would be ok with maintaining the rate but not the increase. He is happy to hear that there is not a pro-active code enforcement. People should not be harassed by code enforcement. He is ok with having a police department. He believes our officers are responding to crime, not harassing people. He has decent experiences with our police department. He likes that our department is patrolling and responding to crime not writing tickets.

Roger Colvin thanked Council for their service. He understands it is hard. We have recently seen how the residents feel about tax increases and bonds. He is against tax increases. He recently retired, and ran a physical therapy practice for thirty-nine years. He learned to manage well. The City needs to learn to manage well. We expect the City Council and City manager to manage well. What can you cut; what fat can be trimmed. He never had to take a cut in pay because he managed well. He did what was needed to survive. \$50,000 is not a large amount of money, the City can find that to trim. If you looked closely, you can find it.

Jordan Wheelwright echoed his fellow citizens. Tax increases in the time now with record inflation is a joke. Residents are having to make cuts. There is a lot of fat that can be trimmed. We have a spending problem not an income problem. We need to make some cuts. You are hurting your citizens. What do you expect residents to do. We want to live in Harrisville. That tax increase might not affect people very much right now but could have a huge impact later.

Motion: Council Member Wilhelmsen made a motion to close the public hearing to receive input from the public for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy, second by Council Member Weiss.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes
Council Member Weiss, Yes
Council Member Christensen, Yes
Council Member Jackson, Yes
Council Member Fawcett, Yes

The motion passed unanimously

4. Adjournment

Council Member Weiss motioned to adjourn the meeting, second by Council Member Fawcett.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes
Council Member Weiss, Yes
Council Member Christensen, Yes
Council Member Jackson, Yes
Council Member Fawcett, Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:38 P.M.


ATTEST:





Jack Fogal
City Recorder

Approved this 13th day of August, 2024



MICHELLE TAIT
Mayor