

**Mayor**  
Kenneth Romney

## **WEST BOUNTIFUL CITY**

**City Administrator**  
Duane Huffman

**City Council**  
James Ahlstrom  
James Bruhn  
Kelly Enquist  
Mark Preece  
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**Public Works Director**  
Steve Maughan

### **THE WEST BOUNTIFUL CITY COUNCIL WILL HOLD A REGULAR MEETING AT 7:30 PM ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2023, AT THE CITY OFFICES**

*Invocation/Thought –James Bruhn; Pledge of Allegiance – Kelly Enquist*

1. Approve Agenda.
2. Public Hearing on Proposed Increase to the City's Certified Tax Rate.
3. Resolution 540-23, A Resolution Adopting Final Property Tax Rate and Budgets for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.
4. Meeting Minutes from August 1, 2023.
5. Adjourn.

*The above agenda was posted on the State Public Notice website ([Utah.gov/pmn](http://Utah.gov/pmn)), the city website ([WBCity.org](http://WBCity.org)), posted at city hall, emailed to the Mayor and City Council, and provided to the Davis Journal on August 11, 28, 2023, by Cathy Brightwell, City Recorder.*

Minutes of the West Bountiful City Council meeting held on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at West Bountiful City Hall, 550 N 800 West, West Bountiful, Davis County, Utah.

**MEMBERS:** Mayor Ken Romney, Council members James Ahlstrom, James Bruhn, Kelly Enquist, Mark Preece, and Rod Wood.

**STAFF:** Duane Huffman (City Administrator), Chief Brandon Erikson, Steve Maughan (Public Works Director), and Cathy Brightwell (City Recorder).

**PUBLIC:** Deby Marshall, Alan Malan, Jenn Nielsen, Dell Butterfield, Richmond Thornley, Debbie McKean, James Behunin, Mark Salmon, Tyler Payne, Gary Jacketta

Mayor Romney called the regular meeting to order at 7:32 pm. James Bruhn provided a thought; Kelly Enquist led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Approve the Agenda.**

**MOTION:** *James Bruhn made a Motion to approve the agenda as presented. Rod Wood seconded the Motion which PASSED unanimously.*

**2. Public Hearing on Proposed Increase to the City's Certified Tax Rate.**

Duane Huffman provided an overview of the Truth in Taxation process, this year's tentative budget, and the proposed increase to the certified tax rate. He explained that following the public hearing, the city council is required to adopt a FY 24 final budget and property tax rate, which can be done on the same night or at another meeting prior to August 31. He noted that it has been some time since the city has increased taxes. In 2017, the city adjusted the property tax rate to capture industrial growth in the area. In 2011, the city increased property taxes with the specific purpose of road maintenance – that increase of \$212,500 is deposited every year in a capital project fund used solely for road projects.

Proposed Budget - The council tentatively adopted the FY 24 Budget on June 20<sup>th</sup> and set tonight's public hearing to consider a 12.8% increase in the property tax rate (approximately \$46.20 per year for the average West Bountiful home). Highlights of the proposed budget include:

- Addition of 1 new full-time police officer (the purpose of the proposed tax increase).
- 4 new service vehicles (3 police, 1 parks). Approximately \$258K in expenses and \$75K in revenue.
- A new skid steer to be shared by the water, roads, and parks departments.
- \$100K for sidewalk maintenance.
- A 5% inflationary increase in the city-wide pay scale.
- \$336K for park improvements (replacing playgrounds, new lighting, etc.).
- \$142K from the golf fund for golf course grounds improvements and equipment (cart paths, tee leveling, top dresser).
  - The tentative budget did not include funding for piping the ditch near the #2 green and #3 tee box (near the north end of 975 W). Staff are currently researching more cost-effective options for this project.
- \$200K from the Capital Projects Fund towards debt service of the new public works facility.

- \$2.2 million for the 660 W (400 N – 1000 N) water line replacement and road re-build project, including curb and sidewalk along both sides of the road. This funding comes from the Water Fund, Road Funds, Storm Water Fund, and Capital Project Fund.

Proposed Property Tax Increase - The purpose of the proposed property tax increase is to raise approximately \$167K to fund the addition of 1 new patrol position within the police department.

Due to the increasing demands on police services and the changing nature of law enforcement, the police department needs an additional officer, bringing the entire department to a total of 12 sworn officers. This new position will help prevent burnout and turnover and will increase the department's ability to be proactive in the community.

The council has previously authorized the hiring of this position, so the question is primarily how to pay for it.

For the last 10 years, the city has been able to increase service levels and fund inflationary increases in equipment and wages through increases in sales tax collections and new growth in property taxes from industrial investment. However, sales tax collections for the first seven months of 2023 have fallen 1.76%, and there is no expectation of significant new growth from property taxes. There simply isn't room in the budget for new on-going services without changes.

To fund a new officer, the city has the following options:

1. Increase the property tax revenue to fund the position.
2. Use fund balance (rainy day funds) for a new on-going cost. Generally, fund balance is reserved for emergencies, significant economic downturns, and one-time expenses.
3. Decrease other on-going expenses. Most of the flexibility in the budget is related to one-time capital expenses, with many of these items having their own funding sources. To decrease on-going expenses, the city would need to reduce maintenance of things like parks or reduce other General Fund personnel costs.

There was discussion about other options to cover the cost of a new officer. Mr. Huffman said that the city has done a good job of controlling spending and has benefitted from growth in sales taxes over the years. We have looked at ways to reduce costs in the General Fund, deferred maintenance, pay reductions, and other reductions in service. While there is nearly \$2M fund balance in the General Fund, it is considered a "rainy day fund" to help cushion large emergencies, other capital expenses, and changes in the economy, and would be dangerous to use for ongoing expenses. For similar reasons, it is not recommended to use a portion of the Capital Fund to cover the cost of a new officer.

**MOTION:** *Rod Wood Made a Motion to Open the Public Hearing. Mark Preece seconded the Motion, which passed as shown below.*

*James Ahlstrom – aye*

*James Bruhn – aye*

*Kelly Enquist – ate*

*Mark Preece – aye*

*Rod Wood - aye*

**Mark Salmon**, 777 Pages Lane, commented that he did not believe the city needed another officer or the tax increase.

**Debbie McKean**, 1075 W 1070 North, thanked Duane for his presentation which answered a lot of her questions. She said the city council is doing an awesome job and when she was on the council in 2011, the city didn't have any reserve money so if it wasn't there, it couldn't be spent. The last increase was for needed infrastructure and she is excited to learn that the city has \$2M in savings, but the reason for this increase is insufficient. She believes an increase is not necessary and the city should wait a few years until the economy stabilizes. She said it's up to the council to know if we need another officer and she understands everyone is overworked. If it is needed, she wants it to be taken out of savings, because residents are overtaxed by multiple entities.

**Tyler Payne**, 2160 N 520 West, thanked Duane for a great presentation. He asked if police officers utilization is going up, and what has been done administratively to cover the need? The city should be fiscally responsible, and now is not a good time to raise taxes. Taxes are based on home values which are going up, but they are unrealized gains, purchase power has gone down.

Mayor Romney asked Chief Erikson to talk about the increasing time burdens on officers. He responded that there are many new standards and investigation requirements for officers taking much more time now compared to the past. While city population growth is slow, there has been a big impact from people coming through the city, about 20-30K people a day. Crimes have become more complex and very time-consuming, requiring a massive amount of resources. We are lucky to be able to work closely with police agencies from surrounding cities and we help each other cover critical events and staffing shortages, and events resulting in SWAT standoff - 3 separate SWAT standoffs in the past year. Even with this help, we have done studies that show we need another officer.

Mayor Romney agreed that policing is a little different these days. Reporting has become more complex with a lot more paperwork. During an event, there are often 3-4 officers on scene and each officer is required to view their body camera footage for reporting which takes a lot of hours. We increased from 1 to 2 detectives to try to catch up on past investigations and reporting backlog. Officers are also often required to listen to hours and hours of inmate phone calls as part of their investigations. This all takes a lot more time but is required to keep the city safe.

**Deby Marshall**, 1314 W 400 North, said she loves our police force. She has lived here 40 years and has had them constantly on her street, which is great because we need them. The city also needs to keep their DARE officer. She said it is hard when taxes continue to go up but believes we really need to be fighting the school district – they are the ones taxing us to death. As far as officers, good mental health is very important, and we need to make sure they aren't overwhelmed. They deal with many break-ins and homeless people coming from Salt Lake which is a new problem for our city. She said she is in favor of the proposed tax increase to pay for a new officer.

**Gary Jacketta**, 1406 N 675 West, asked how many hours officers work and why they are always in Bountiful.

Chief Erikson responded that their normal work week is 40 hours, but it could easily go to 50-60 hours depending on what comes up. He added that our officers are sometimes in Bountiful, and other cities because we all work to help each other, including their officers helping us when needed.

**James Behunin**, 1360 N 950 West, asked why this is being discussed in August when the budget runs from July through June. Duane Huffman responded that the state Truth in Taxation process requires a proposed rate to be set in June with multiple public notice requirements that take us to August. He explained that property taxes are on a calendar year so will take effect in January. Mr. Behunin said he has spent a career looking at budgets, and the \$2M surplus in a \$5M budget sounds like a lot but won't last very long. He asked

about police salaries and encouraged the city to pay competitive wages, so our officers do not leave to go to other agencies. Mr. Behunin said he supports the proposal. He believes we should keep the fund balance where it is and does not want to see the Capital Fund reduced. We have become a city that cares about managing infrastructure and reducing that fund would be a step backward. It is ok to increase taxes to support a well-run city.

**Alan Malan**, 772 W 1400 North, is opposed to the tax increase and believes it can be funded another way. He said the council just nixed paying off \$800K of the public works bond. He said we probably do need a new officer to help with new Ivory development, but it should not be funded through a property tax increase.

**Jenn Nielsen**, 696 W 810 North, said she wholeheartedly supports hiring a new officer but doesn't know enough about the city's budget to know if we can take it from somewhere else or if it is something that can wait until next year. She trusts that the council has looked into all options. A \$40/yr tax increase is worth it to keep kids safe and is not fiscally irresponsible.

**Dell Butterfield**, 1217 W Millbridge Lane, said he has heard good things about our police force but does not know if a new officer is needed. There are weird types of crimes now and they are only getting worse. An additional officer would be nice to help fill a shift. Based on his background he does not want to see the increase come out of the General Fund, so it is probably best to move forward with the property tax proposal.

**Richmond Thornley**, 2163 N 520 West, said he has been present for most of the budget meetings and hearings and knows the city council has not tried to come up with any fluff. He was raised by a single mom and understands that even \$1 can make a difference on a fixed income, but it's probably good if we can get a new officer now, not knowing what is going to happen next year. He said he is in favor of the proposal although another review of the budget to see if anything else can be found wouldn't hurt.

**Frank Yingst**, 584 W 1225 North, is against hiring an additional officer. He suggests the city eliminate its police force and use Bountiful's, especially when their taxes are 35% lower than ours.

**MOTION:** *James Bruhn Made a Motion to Close the Public Hearing. James Ahlstrom seconded the Motion, which passed unanimously.*

**3. Resolution 540-23, A Resolution Adopting Final Property Tax Rate and Budgets for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.**

Mayor Romney stated there are several options available. We can adopt the proposal, table it and schedule a special meeting, or not adopt it and modify the tentative budget. He asked council members for their thoughts.

Council member Ahlstrom is concerned that leaving taxes where they are and paying for a new officer out of savings or Capital Fund may lead to future perpetual increases. We have projects like 660 West, debt service, and a new park to consider and \$200 M, although not specifically earmarked for anything right now, would be very easy to spend. But he also understands the idea of using funding from the Capital Fund for one year to see if on-going revenues catch up in the future. He suggests that we take advantage of having a fifth Tuesday by tabling a decision until August 29 to give us more time to consider the proposal and possible other options.

Council member Bruhn believes funding for the new officer should come from fund balance and the Capital Improvements Fund.

Council member Wood asked about the net effect of using the General Fund for an officer. Duane Huffman responded if we use it for an on-going expense, we're making a bet that it can be sustainable, and if not, future increases would likely be a higher percentage if we fund the expense and make up what was used from any fund balance. The 660 West road project has \$1.3 budget which is likely to go up, and sales tax revenues are down 1.6%. We can probably take it out of either fund without immediate drastic impact but unsure about the future.

Council member Preece acknowledged that a police department is expensive. He believes the reason residents don't see them is because they're out of service writing reports, investigating cases, etc. We already funded a cop out of the General Fund two years ago and now we need to come up with another source.

Council member Enquist asked what will the new officer do? Could we not hire an officer and instead get less expensive clerical staff to help out? He said he would prefer to tighten our belts and look at other ways to save money and take what was needed out of the General Fund. Chief Erikson responded that clerical staff would not fill the need. We need someone to be out on the street.

Duane Huffman reminded the council that authorization was given in June for a new officer, and one has already been hired. The question is how to fund it.

Mayor Romney commented that even though he doesn't usually vote, he is part of the city council and would like to make a couple comments. He said the city has come through some tough times, and in the past, we didn't look at the future as well as we should have. We have made an effort to get on a good path of fiscal responsibility and implemented 10, 20, 30 year capital improvement plans, and we need to stay on that path. We have made good hiring decisions, acquired the right equipment, and have been frugal in the way we spend. The decision for a tax increase is not made lightly. He said that he believes it is in the best interest of the city to fund the new officer with the proposed tax increase. He added that he really appreciates the council and the good discussion we are able to have even when we don't all agree, and he believes the council provides a great service to the citizens of this city.

**MOTION:** *James Ahlstrom moved to table the issue tonight and set a special meeting on August 29, 2023, so that more information can be gathered and reviewed. The Motion died due to lack of a second.*

**MOTION:** *James Bruhn moved to remove the property tax increase and make up the General Fund budget shortfall from a Capital Fund transfer. Kelly Enquist seconded the Motion, which failed as shown below.*

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>James Ahlstrom – nay</i> | <i>James Bruhn – aye</i> |
| <i>Kelly Enquist – aye</i>  | <i>Mark Preece – nay</i> |
| <i>Rod Wood - nay</i>       |                          |

**MOTION:** *Rod Wood moved to Approve Resolution 540-23 as presented. Mark Preece seconded the Motion, which passed as shown below.*

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>James Ahlstrom – aye</i> | <i>James Bruhn – nay</i> |
| <i>Kelly Enquist – nay</i>  | <i>Mark Preece – aye</i> |
| <i>Rod Wood - aye</i>       |                          |

4. Meeting Minutes from August 1, 2023.

Cathy Brightwell  
Cathy Brightwell, City Recorder

