

Minutes for  
Work Session  
August 2, 2011  
8:40 p.m.

1. Discussion on Truth in Taxation Public Hearing – Review of Materials

Craig has developed some PowerPoint slides to explain the purpose of the proposed tax increase. The increased revenue is needed to properly fund a maintenance and capital improvement plan for streets. The current budget covers everything except the streets. The slides show: the preventative maintenance plan in which a sealant will be applied to the streets, extending the life of the streets 20 to 75 years; savings with this plan over rebuilding roads more often; the fund balance showing distribution to West Bountiful of its share of sales tax; list of money-saving measures the administration has taken; and, a tax rate comparison done by Davis County with a chart showing the increase on an average home in West Bountiful. The final slide explains that there is no long-term funding for the streets. After the collection, they will be able to maintain and repair streets on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Mayor Romney asked that the presentation be no longer than ten minutes. After the presentation, there will be questions and answers and comments from the public. Craig asked if he should leave any of the information out, and it was suggested he just move a couple of slides around because some of the figures were confusing as to what they referred to. Valerie Shaw suggested putting the slides on line so people can review them before coming to the hearing.

2. Discussion on Public Safety / Law Enforcement.

Mayor Romney – The city has been approached in the past by the county regarding the sheriff's department serving as the law enforcement unit for West Bountiful. The sheriff's department has sent to Mayor Romney initial numbers and options. There was no information regarding the service they would provide in order to compare that service and the service already received by the West Bountiful police. Two weeks later Mayor Romney received a second letter stating different figures. He has not had a chance to talk with them yet. The city has also been approached by people in Bountiful and Woods Cross about having those cities' departments cover West Bountiful. They indicated they would like to talk with Mayor Romney before he talks with the sheriff's department. The other cities have served as backup to the West Bountiful police when needed.

Mayor Romney stated that when he compared the cost per citizen of West Bountiful for the police service to the cost per citizen in other cities, West Bountiful came in the least expensive. He also feels the city gets better service from a local force.

Mark Preece stated it was a good time to discuss this issue because the police department is short now, they are getting a new chief, and they are trying to get a couple of new cars. He would oppose any tax increases until he has seen the whole picture. His preference would be to keep the West Bountiful police department as it is.

Valerie Shaw has heard residents say they would rather have less service than pay more in taxes. In budget sessions the public always brings up the police department and the golf course as having budgets that can be cut. She wants more information in order to decide if there are any changes possible or necessary to save money. She expressed frustration in that this issue has been discussed in the past, but nothing has ever been done. She would like to see bids from the other two cities.

James Bruhn is frustrated they are having the discussion because when he saw bids from the county two years ago, he was satisfied with the city's own department and he thought that was the final decision. He suggested the city go ahead and order the new cars.

John Baza said he does not think it should be disruptive to the police department if they revisit cost effectiveness and service periodically. He does not think a change is necessary. However, it is helpful to have hard information when citizens bring up the police department during budget sessions, especially since there will be a new council in the next budget year.

Mayor Romney said he has been slow because he wants to be very careful. He has only been recently aware of the politics involved with different cities and the county. He is expecting some information from Bountiful which he will send out to council members when he gets it. There will probably need to be a little further discussion before the matter is put to rest. It was suggested they put out standard bids, but in this situation, that would not be necessary because they aren't really looking at a definite change. Mayor Romney said as he receives information he will share it with council and they can decide whether to make a change or not based on that information. He wants to keep the issue fairly quiet so as not to stir up politics in the county.

The property tax hike was mentioned as something to consider when talking about police department changes. Craig Howe pointed out that the property tax increase has nothing to do with this issue because those funds can only be used for streets.

Officer Rasmussen stated that the officers and employees of the police department are not dollars and cents and he likened contracting out for police service to taking all the teachers out of a school and staffing it with substitutes. The West Bountiful police department struggled at one time, but when Randy Lloyd came in, he brought people with him and professionalized the department. Everyone in the department contributed to the improvements. These discussions have made everyone on the police department very nervous, and it has damaged their morale.

Former Chief Randy Lloyd stated if the city gives up their police force at this time, they may never get it back. The main reasons cities are coming forward is because they do not want the sheriff's department in the area. They don't have a lot to offer; for example, Woods Cross will be able to provide one-half of a detective.

Mayor Romney said he would provide Officer Rasmussen with numbers as he receives them.

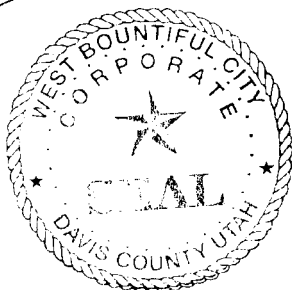
Kelly Enquist, a visitor, stated he wants to see the police department stay as it is. He pointed out the police cars give West Bountiful an identity.

Valerie Shaw said that when citizens bring up the police department as a budget issue, the council needs to be able to state they have looked at all the options. At present, they cannot say that.

Officer Jesse Whitear stated that council should consider the citizens who rely on the police. Most of the people present at the meeting do not have issues that involve the police, but there are many families who do, and the officers know them and they know the officers. He went on to say their main job is to protect the city. They are not distracted by having to do search and rescue, run a jail, etc.

3. Adjourn work session, return to council meeting.

  
MAYOR KENNETH ROMNEY



  
HEIDI VOORDECKERS (CITY RECORDER)

  
NATHALIE ELLINGSON (SECRETARY)