

ALPINE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Alpine City Hall, 20 North Main
Alpine, UT
August 20, 2019

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Troy Stout.

A. Roll Call: The following were present:

Mayor Troy Stout

Council Members: Ramon Beck, Jason Thelin, Carla Merrill, Kimberly Bryant, Lon Lott

Staff: Shane Sorensen, Austin Roy, Marla Fox, Police Chief Gwilliam, Fire Chief Reed Thompson

Others: Keith Wilson, Terri Wilson, Loraine Lott, David McManus, Catherine Marchant, Sherman Myers, Terry Averett, Carolyn Riley, Norine Garrett, Connie McKeon, Paul Bennett, Sylvia Christiansen, Sullivan Love, Colleen Taylor, Merrily Lau, David Harvey, Marsha Harvey, Gordon Willis, Susan Willis, Marianne Smith, Lindsey Hegerhorst, Ernest Ramos, Viola Ramos, Dave Blackwell, Annette Flygare, Allison Bench, John Lohner, Diane Lohner, Daryle Hughes, Klaus Goeckeritz, Constance Goeckeritz, Mike Christofferson, Alan Jensen, Lois Jensen, Jeff Call, Clark K. Parker, Christy Parker, Jessica Smuin, Richard James, Mark Dell'Ergo, Jill Dell'Ergo, Katrina Kennedy, Udell Blackham, Dave Matthews, Jennifer Stout, Troy Ellis, Andy Goddard, David Larsen, Jeanne Larsen, Melanie Ewing, Vickie Mueller, Dennis Fox, Suzanne Aldous, Judi Pickell, Blair Dennis

B. Prayer: **Ramon Beck**

C. Pledge of Allegiance: **Troop 808**

II. PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED TAX INCREASE and ALPINE CITY BUDGET FY 2019-20

Mayor Stout said an anonymous letter had been sent to Alpine Residents, which posed the question of whether or not Alpine needed smaller city government. He said that if they really looked at how the city was constructed, and compared it to other comparably sized cities, they ran a very lean operation and had done so for many years. They had been short-staffed for years to make sure they were as frugal as possible. Every member of the staff had multiple responsibilities as part of that burden.

Mayor Stout said that the Council worked very hard to not over-govern, but to do the things necessary for our community. He encouraged the residents to attend meetings to get a glimpse of that. He also encouraged the residents to feel free to pick up the phone at any time and talk to him or the City Council because they were happy to discuss the issues. Government in Alpine was not nearly as big as what one would find in other comparably sized cities.

Mayor Stout said the anonymous letter claimed that Cedar Hills City was saving money with their current agreement with American Fork. Cedar Hills had told Alpine and Highland of their plan to leave the Lone Peak Public Safety District two year ago. Alpine fought to keep them, but Cedar Hills decided to sign a contract with American Fork. Alpine could have chosen to leave as well but did not think that was in the best interest of the City. He said it was not accurate that they would save money by leaving. He said it was also impractical to go to American Fork City because Alpine didn't share a border with them. Emergency services could not be provided in a timely manner because they had to travel through another city to get to Alpine. Mayor Stout said the mayors of the three cities met to discuss this issue multiple times. Once cities knew Cedar Hills was leaving, the Public Safety District made cuts in preparation for their departure. However, costs had gone up and the City's obligations to meet public safety had not gone down, plus they had assets like trucks and equipment which required upkeep and replacement. Alpine did ask the Chiefs to cut their costs without compromising the safety of the cities, and they did,

Mayor Stout that he took this decision to increase taxes very seriously because one of his primary responsibilities as a government leader was the safety of the community. And as a resident of Alpine, he would be paying for the increase like everyone else.

Shane Sorensen - Presentation. Mr. Sorensen said a lot of time had been spent on both the Alpine City Budget and the Lone Peak Public Safety District Budget. On June 25, 2019, the Council held a special Public Hearing on the proposed budget. Tonight, they were holding a Truth and Taxation Hearing, which was required by State Law.

Shane Sorensen identified what the increases in the budget were for.

Police Department

1. Officer recruitment and retention
2. Increase starting wage
3. 3% merit
4. Retirement, increased due to increased wages
5. 401 K
6. Vehicle replacement

Fire Department

1. Address Changes due to the Cedar Hills Departure
2. Reduce Fire Fighters from 9 to 8
3. Proposed staffing
4. Alpine fire station 2

Shane Sorensen showed how the fees would be allocated. The Alpine Fire Station had a three-man crew and a fire truck that also had ambulance capabilities. The Highland Fire Station had a three-man crew, a fire truck, and an ambulance with a two-man crew.

Shane Sorensen explained where the tax dollars go. He said that in past years, Alpine School District received the largest portion of property taxes. Alpine City got 12.6%. The proposed 2019 tax showed that the School District would get about 70% and Alpine City would get 15%. The proposed revenue increase for 2020 would be \$423,633.66. That increase would translate to a cost of \$1.67 per month for each \$100,000 of home value. If a home was valued at \$600,000, the taxes would increase by about \$122 a year.

Police Chief Brian Gwilliam said the basis for the increase for the Police Department was for retention and recruitment. There was a shortage of police officers in Utah because of retiring officers, plus it was a profession that people didn't want to go into. The recruitment pool was shrinking, and the population was growing. He said the department needed to hire and replace officers. He proposed an increase to the starting wage, which would increase annual salaries from \$41,000 to \$45,000. He was also asking for a 3% merit increase for good work. Competing cities offered better benefit packages and they would like to match some of those offers. There was also a need to replace four vehicles.

Fire Chief Reed Thompson said the primary adjustment to the Fire Department Budget was a result of Cedar Hills leaving the District. American Fork had provided a proposal to Cedar Hills and they chose to go with them. He said that when he hired on to the Lone Peak Fire District, he saw that they top heavy, so he reduced the administrative positions from five to two in order to reduce costs. His team looked at the operations model and decided to go with a three-man crew at each city. The two cities would share the ambulance, which was stationed in Highland. The fire truck in Alpine also had ambulance capabilities. The firefighters would be trained as paramedics as well. With that plan, Chief Thompson felt they would be able to respond to emergencies in a timely manner. He said all of Alpine could be reached within eight minutes from the Alpine Station. He said eighty percent of Alpine could be reached in eight minutes by the ambulance. 37% of the staff would be in Alpine and Alpine would have 35% of the budget. He said if Alpine had their own station with all the staffing and all the components it would cost \$1.2 million. The proposed budget of \$1.1 million would be shared with Highland City. Chief Thompson added that he met with American Fork and they had no interest in sharing a program with Alpine. They did not share a border with Alpine and Alpine had large homes on the mountainsides, which made firefighting difficult. He said he had cut his budget by over \$100,000 and cut staff from nine employees to eight employees. He still had industry standards he had to meet but was able to cut the fluff.

Ramon Beck said he was on a fixed income but he felt like the chiefs had successfully sat down and looked at how to fix the budget situation. Emergency services were about safety and it was a big deal.

Jason Thelin said he had met with the Fire Chief Thompson a few times and saw that he had a white board in his office filled with ideas on how to save money.

Lon Lott said each member of the City Council had met with the chiefs to see what a realistic budget would be. There were fixed costs that didn't go away. Even if they streamlined and tried to make cuts, they still had to have vehicles and hoses and equipment that worked. Employees' wages had been talked about, but these men were putting their lives at risk for such a little amount. The citizens needed qualified people to save a life or to resuscitate someone. The fire department had seen some turbulent times, but Chief Thompson had tried hard to make things work. Lon Lott said most of the citizens in attendance that evening fell into the senior age bracket. He said he was getting older too, and would soon be on a fixed income, as well. He said that in the 33 years he had lived in Alpine, he had paid just over \$5,400 for the police department and the fire department and parks. He said this increase was not a one-time thing where they could cut out one thing to pay for it. He said he understood the concerns about coming up with money on a fixed income.

Kim Bryant said she had spent over ten years on the Lone Peak Public Safety Board. The chiefs had worked hard to trim their budget. She said she didn't appreciate someone writing a letter insinuating that the city hadn't done their due diligence to find way to trim and cut. The Lone Peak PSD had some of the best paramedics in the state as well as policemen. These men put their lives on the line for very little pay. By increasing the budget, they were trying to keep Alpine citizens safe.

III. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX INCREASE

Mayor Stout opened the Hearing for public comment.

Suzanne Peterson, Country Manor Lane, said she had a neighbor who had a medical problem and the paramedics responded quickly and it was appreciated by the neighbors. In 2014, there was breach of contract that cost the city two million dollars. She wanted to know about that.

Mayor Stout said there was a court case and the money was paid to the developer. The jury awarded the dollar amount and the rainy-day fund was used to pay that debt. It was not something the City could budget for and it was a one-time amount. This tax increase was about an ongoing budget that the City had to plan for each year. Had the City not had to pay for the lawsuit, they could have used some of this money in the rainy day fund, but it would not have lasted very long.

Mrs. Peterson asked if the City presently had a rainy day fund. Mayor Stout said the City had an ongoing fund that they added to. Mrs. Peterson asked if Alpine owned their own fire station. Mayor Stout said Alpine City did own the fire station and each city was responsible for the maintenance of their own station.

Blain Dennis, Mountain Oak Circle, said salaries were a big portion of the budget. He wanted to see a comparison of salaries to neighboring cities and all the human resources of the city staff. He wanted to know where Alpine stood and if they were on par with everyone else.

Mayor Stout said Alpine had a limited business district compared to other cities so that makes a difference in tax revenue. Shane Sorensen said some cities had lower taxes rates.

Sullivan Love, Scenic Drive, asked if there was any discussion with Lehi City about fire service. Chief Thompson said Lehi was not sought out this year. Mr. Sullivan asked if salaries and benefits dropped. Shane Sorensen said there was some decrease for less experienced, new officers.

Clark Parker, East Mountain Drive, said there were costs for metering watering, pushing snow for parking lots in Smooth Canyon, and the lawsuit. He said the perception was that money was being spent that maybe didn't need to be spent.

Mayor Stout said there were some projects that the City did now because if they waited, it would cost more later on. Regarding the installation of water meters for pressurized water, the state was requiring metered water at some point. The City had a million dollar grant available. If they hadn't taken advantage of it, they would have lost it and would have to pay the full amount later on.

Lon Lott said the City had talented men on staff who were able to take care of many of the construction projects. They were able to do things in-house rather than hiring outside contractors, which saved the City money.

Shane Sorensen noted that the tax increase would go to the safety district. The City had different funds for other projects.

Catherine Marchant, Lakeview Drive, said Utah County residents seemed to want something for nothing, but they had to expect to pay for good services. She said it was okay to raise taxes so they could continue to live in a great community.

David Harvey, Lakeview Drive, asked the Council to improve the sound system in the Council Chambers. He said he was opposed to any tax increase and said this would be quite an increase for him. Seniors were being taxed out of their homes. He wanted to know if there could be a tax ceiling for seniors that were on fixed incomes. He asked for a ten percent reduction in what was being proposed or some way to help the seniors.

Dave McManus, Main Street, said it was hard to rely on receiving emergency services from other cities because someone got shortchanged. He said Alpine needed their own officers and own ambulance so they could serve the residents of Alpine. It took time for other cities' emergency vehicles to get to Alpine. He asked how much a life was worth?

Alan Gilman, Westfield Road, said citizens should review the newsletter and if there was something they were concerned about, come to the Council meetings. He said everyone should be involved the water rates increase.

Dave Mathews said it was his opinion that the budget was the responsibility of the City Council. He said the proposed tax increase was reasonable, but it was a startling in one-year jump. He asked if this would be stable or if the tax would continue to go up year after year.

Mayor Stout said the increase was built in to address some issues from the past and also plan for the future.

Paul Bennett, Fort Canyon Rd, wanted to know why a fire truck had to come on site when an ambulance was requested. Fire Chief Thompson said the staff on the fire truck provided care before the ambulance arrived and for transport. He said they needed the manpower on both pieces of equipment to provide the necessary aid.

Sherman Myers, Lakeview Drive, said he supported an increase but would like to see faster response times. He said the credit rating of a city was in part decided by the willingness of the city to implement tax increases.

Udell Blackam, Ridge Lane, asked what Cedar Hills was paying. Chief Thompson said their cost was based on the number of residents and said their percent was 26% with a dollar amount of \$780,000. Mayor Stout said there was a cost to leaving the district as well.

Keith Wilson, 100 South, asked when the PI bond would expire. Shane Sorensen said it would be paid off in about six years. Mr. Wilson said he was told that the city was cutting benefits of the police and fire. Chief Thompson said in this proposed budget, they were mid-market with our competitors.

Chief Gwilliam said the police were actually going to increase the benefit package.

Mayor Stout said public safety was managed by a board with members from each city. Each city had an equal say in proportion to the number of residents.

Lon Lott said that if Alpine went with service from American Fork or Lehi, they would not have a say.

Mayor Stout said if Alpine did contract with another city, it would only be for the length of the contract and then the host city could raise the prices greatly, leaving Alpine with no voice or control.

Carla Merrill said she was in favor of the tax increase for the safety of the citizens.

Kimberly Bryant said even with the increase, Alpine's tax rate was still lower than many cities in the county.

Ramon Beck said the City should annex lots that were in the county but were adjacent to Alpine and used City services. They should bring those lots so their taxes and fees were going to Alpine rather than the county.

Jason Thelin said he felt that the letter that was sent out was dishonest because all these questions could be answered by staff or Council.

Mayor Stout said all these questions have already been answered in previous meetings.

Lon Lott said he appreciated the comments made that night. He said he would look into what could be done to help give a break to seniors. It was difficult to make these decisions, but they had to be made to keep the community moving along.

Mayor Stout thanked the fire and police chiefs for the work they did. He also said the Alpine City staff was very lean and everyone did additional work to help save money.

Mayor Stout closed the Public Hearing.

IV. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Ordinance No. 2019-19A, Adopting the Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20.

Shane Sorensen said the budget was originally presented in June. Nothing had changed from what was adopted as the tentative budget.

MOTION: Carla Merrill moved to approve Ordinance No. 2019-19 adopting the Alpine City Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20. Jason Thelin seconded. Ayes: 5 and Nay: 0. Motion passed.

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>
Jason Thelin	None
Ramon Beck	
Carla Merrill	
Kimberly Bryant	
Lon Lott	

B. Resolution No. 2019-09, Adopting the Certified Tax Rate

MOTION: Kimberly Bryant moved to approve Resolution No. 2019-09 adopting the Certified Tax Rate. Lon Lott seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0. Motion passed.

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Nays</u>
Jason Thelin	None
Ramon Beck	
Carla Merrill	
Kimberly Bryant	
Lon Lott	

MOTION: Ramon Beck moved to adjourn. Carla Merrill seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 pm.

August 20, 2019