

FARMINGTON CITY – CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

August 20, 2024

REGULAR SESSION

Present:

*Mayor Brett Anderson,
City Manager Brigham Mellor,
Mayor Pro Tempore/Councilmember Alex
Leeman,
Councilmember Roger Child,
Councilmember Scott Isaacson,
Councilmember Melissa Layton,
Councilmember Amy Shumway,
City Attorney Paul Roberts,
City Recorder DeAnn Carlile,
Recording Secretary Deanne Chaston,*

*Community Development Director Dave
Petersen,
Assistant City Manager/City Engineer Chad
Boshell,
Finance Director Greg Davis,
Assistant Finance Director Levi Ball,
City Parks and Recreation Director Colby
Thackeray,
Public Works Director Larry Famuliner,
Police Chief Eric Johnsen, and
Fire Chief Rich Love.*

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor **Brett Anderson** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. City Manager **Brigham Mellor** offered the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember **Melissa Layton**.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Property tax increase for Fiscal Year 2025, Truth in Taxation (TNT)

Mellor noted the many police officers in attendance and said the property tax increase would be for a 20% wage increase for Farmington’s police. For those who say that 20% is more than inflation, he noted that housing, fuel, and wages are not calculated in inflation. Instead, it is a basket of goods.

The demand for police officers is exceeding supply, and this isn’t something exclusive to the State of Utah or Farmington City. A lot of people just don’t want to be police officers anymore. The career is incredibly difficult because there is a lot of risk taken, and now there is diminishing supply. Officers have to be smarter, better trained, and more educated than ever before. There is a lot of competition between cities for police officers, and a lot of Farmington’s officers leave for employment in other better-paying nearby communities. They don’t want to leave Farmington, but the wages just aren’t competitive enough to keep them. Last year Farmington did a tax increase to hire more officers. Since, they have hired only one of the three they needed. They haven’t been able to hire more because of the low wage.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 to 2025 budget adopted in June of 2024 included revenue generated from this proposed property tax increase. As part of the required process, the Council must hold a TNT hearing before formally adopting the certified tax rate of 0.001741 for property tax year 2024 (Farmington’s FY25). The tax increase proposed in the FY 2025 budget levies an increase of approximately 3.4% to a residence’s total tax bill—or a 27% increase for Farmington City’s

portion of the property tax bill. Some 66.5% of a typical property tax bill goes to school services; 15% to Davis County services; 12.2% to Farmington City; and 6.3% to other entities.

Farmington City's tax on a \$724,000 residence would increase from \$503.32 to \$639.91, which is \$136.59 per year. The Farmington City tax on a \$724,000 business would increase from \$915.14 to \$1,163.47, which is \$248.33 per year. A primary residence is taxed at 55% of market value, and businesses are taxed at 100%. If the proposed tax rate is approved, Farmington would increase its property tax budgeted revenue by 27.22% above last year's property tax budgeted revenue, excluding eligible new growth.

If approved, this property tax increase would generate approximately \$1,016,000, helping to cover the \$1,034,000 Police Department budget increase for FY 2025. With this tax increase, Farmington would still rank in the bottom half of Davis County's cities for property tax (considering operations, general obligation bonds, and districts for fire and recreation). Only North Salt Lake, Bountiful, Kaysville, South Weber, and Layton have lower rates than Farmington; while Fruit Heights, Centerville, Syracuse, Clinton, West Bountiful, Woods Cross, West Point, Sunset, and Clearfield have higher tax rates than Farmington's proposed increase.

Mayor Anderson that sewer and garbage have raised their rates in recent pass-through tax increases unrelated to Farmington. Those were not decisions that the City Council made or have control over. Councilmember **Amy Shumway** said the sewer district is billed through Farmington as a courtesy to its residents. In Centerville, they get a sewer bill separate from the city bill.

Mellor said how cities gather and spend revenue is very heavily regulated. There are three forms of revenue: fees for service, sales tax, and property tax. Legally the City cannot make a profit on fees for service. All fees collected have to go for the service for which the fee is charged. Sales tax is capped, and the City cannot change that cap. Some 60,000 people come into Farmington on any given day largely to visit Lagoon, the Legacy Center, or Station Park. Farmington only has leverage over one of the three forms of revenue, and that is property tax.

There has been some discussion about why the City purchased Rock Mill just to be followed by a property tax increase. **Mellor** explained that Farmington took a piece of ground that was reserved for open space, sold it, and used the proceeds to purchase Rock Mill on the east side. Farmington plans to preserve this historic piece of property, but is not carrying it out yet due to lack of money. Currently, **Tom Owens** lives in the house and pays the City rent. Farmington is not giving any money to developers, and Lagoon and Station Park do not give any money to Farmington. There are no sweetheart deals.

Councilmember **Alex Leeman** told the audience that tonight is Part 2 of the discussion. He hoped they looked at the packet tonight to see the budget that got its start in March and ended in June, per State law. The proposed tax increase pays for what is in the budget. If the tax increase is not passed, the Council has to go back and adjust its budget, cutting things. Since March, all Councilmembers pored over the budget, trying hard to match baskets of money to where they go. They try hard to match one-time money with one-time expenses. The City needs to live within its means. One-time money shouldn't go to ongoing expenses like wages, which is the biggest expense the City has.

In the budget, there is a chunk of money allocated to trail construction. This is a grant where the State pays three quarters of the trail expense, and Farmington has to pay the remainder. The one-time money is earmarked for the trail, and it is not ongoing money. This is one example of how the City doesn't have a free-for-all budget it can spend on just anything.

Layton said that each City department head came to the Council with budget that delineated both what they needed and what they wanted. Some 80% of each budget was cut. **Leeman** said he loves that the City's department heads don't make the Council make the hard decisions. They look at each other's lists that are also considered by the Budget Committee. Almost everything that was cut from the budget were things the department heads cut themselves. They recognize where the priorities need to be, which makes it easy for the Council to follow the recommendations. **Mayor Anderson** recalls the all-day meeting he had with the Police Chief in February while preparing for the budget. It was the gloomiest of them all.

Police Chief **Eric Johnsen** addressed both the Council and the standing-room-only audience. Since 2010, he has been involved in Farmington PD's hiring process in some capacity. Lately, they have not had very many applicants and have not even required a physical test. There have been so few applicants that all have been interviewed. After interviewing eight to nine applicants, it turned out that only two were worth the time. It has been very discouraging. Last year's budget allowed for three new officers, but Farmington was only able to hire one due to low wages and other forces. Now that higher wages are being proposed, the City had 30 applicants for two positions. Because they had so many applicants qualifying on paper, they needed to weed the pool down with a series of tests. Of the 30 applicants, 18 showed up for the prothrombin time (PT) and written tests. They interviewed eight applicants last week, and all were worth their time. They plan to interview another eight tomorrow. Three to four of these applicants are laterals, something Farmington has never been able to attract because the pay was so little. This interview cycle has been the first time **Johnsen** has been excited since 2010 because he feels he can once again pick the best of the best. Farmington's expectations are higher now, which is encouraging. He said Farmington residents deserve the best police department, not less-than police officers. There are so many things that require Farmington officers to be at the top of their game, as the City has complex policing requirements with a large retail center and many roadways traversing it.

Councilmember **Scott Isaacson** said he has studied the budget for months, looking at it line for line. When it was suggested that property taxes may need to be raised, initially the elected officials' reactions were against it. It is the last thing they wanted to do. However, he is now convinced that the tax increase is absolutely needed for the community. The Council was elected to make hard decisions. He pointed out that as the value of a home goes up, owners don't pay more property tax. When assessed home values go up in the County, the tax rate goes down so that the amount coming into the Farmington stays the same as the year previous. He didn't understand this for years, and many still don't understand this. The tax rate doesn't increase unless the Council votes on it.

Leeman said there are only two ways Farmington can increase revenue: increase property taxes or increase the growth of the City. An empty field pays about \$5 of taxes per year. If a business or 10 homes are built on the same ground, it generates thousands of dollars in taxes. Farmington got spoiled because in the early 2000s and onward, the City was growing. His own home was built in 2009. Every year Farmington's revenue increased because the City was growing. Now,

there are a lot fewer empty fields because Farmington has become built out. For 13 years, Farmington did not have a property tax increase. In that time, perhaps the City should have been more proactive and increased property taxes in smaller steps. Farmington Station's sales taxes have pretty much leveled out, along with property taxes. There is growth planned in the business park area north of Cabela's. Office buildings pay double the property taxes that houses do, and property taxes from a business park will sustain Farmington for a long time into the future. When interest rates went up, it affected developer loans. The City's long-term strategy may bear out and help pay the bills, but now Farmington is in a couple year gap. They need to stretch the current dollars to meet needs. Fuel, housing, and food are costing more, and Farmington employees are facing the same issues. He is open to residents asking why the City pays for specific things that are in the budget.

Mayor Anderson opened the Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m. He asked the audience to keep their comments to three minutes or less, and refrain from cheering and clapping. The Council will answer questions at the end of the public hearing in order to keep things more predictable and orderly.

Thomas Hatch (372 Greystone Drive, Farmington, Utah) said he is in favor with what all the guys in the back of the room with guns strapped to them want. He was referring to the many Farmington police officers in attendance. He is concerned with the huge increase in the sewer rate mentioned in the last City newsletter. He understands that Farmington doesn't have any control over the rate, it is determined by an outside agency, and it is billed through the City as a courtesy. However, he feels it is taxation without representation. He wants to know who is looking out for residents' interests regarding an entity that has the ability to raise taxes as much as the sewer district did. He doesn't understand how it is handled, and gets concerned when City representatives say they don't have control over it. He wants to know how residents can have control or a say.

Ed Rhodes (995 S. 475 W., Farmington, Utah) said he does support police officers. His dad was a mounted police officer in Pennsylvania. He said a sign was removed from the street he lives on a year ago. When it was removed, it violated the State and United States Constitutions that allow for notice, a hearing, and citizens' rights to voice their concerns. The constitutions were violated for due process, which caused a great problem for all the residents who live on his street. **Mayor Anderson** said he would call **Rhodes** after the meeting.

Tammy Hardy (24 W. Glover Lane, Farmington, Utah) asked if the tax increase will only go to officer wages. She doesn't like the increase, but she also wants police officers to be in the community and be able to support their own families. She appreciates the police, wants to make sure the increase goes to them, and that the money is not borrowed or taken for other things.

Garth Gatrell (1532 W. 1920 N., Layton, Utah) owned property at 38 N. 100 W., Farmington. He asked what portion of the increased revenue would be used for police officer wages, and not their vehicles and elsewhere.

Michael R. Criddle (147 Comanche Road, Farmington, Utah) said this was his first time attending a public hearing, and that he had never shared a comment on his property taxes before. He was a bit discouraged by the presentation before the public hearing was opened. He feels it was about why he should trust the Council, that the Council knows what is best for him, and that a decision has already been made. He got the impression from the notice on his property tax bill

that he could be heard. However, tonight he is not sure if the Council is interested in hearing his concerns. They just told him why he should be enthusiastic for the tax increase that will fund the police. He said that in the five years he has lived in Farmington, his taxes have increased dramatically, almost doubling in those five years. While he agrees with a property tax increase, he would like to see it be less over time, rather than large chunks.

Mayor Anderson said there are a lot of city tax philosophies. There can be big dramatic jumps every so often, or micro-adjustments every year, resulting in more of a slope rather than big steps. **Criddle** said he is an accountant by profession, so budgeting and planning are important to him. It is difficult to have a shortage in his escrow account, which affects his monthly mortgage payment and budget each month for a year. He would prefer smaller increases more frequently.

Marcus Keller (1691 Country Bend Road, Farmington, Utah) said he is never excited to see a property tax increase. He sees so many local governments across the state kick the can down the road until the need to increase taxes balloons, causing pain and discouragement at TNTs. The City's responsibility is essential, as are police officers and the need to attract the best police officers. He appreciates the City Council stepping up to make this tough decision. He encouraged the Council to look at inflation figures every two years when preparing budgets. Other cities have policies to regularly review inflation and property taxes, which avoids large future spikes. Hopefully Farmington's future growth will help. The way the City has to report the tax increase as a percentage is misleading. He loves the idea of having small incremental increases that are easier to prepare for on a budget. It is easier for people to digest. People understand inflation, and the City is not exempt. Smoothing out big spikes makes the process easier. Farmington is so dependent on sales tax, and it is eventually inevitable that is going to slow down or flat line. Property taxes need to keep up with inflation.

Mayor Anderson said he attends a monthly meeting with other Davis County mayors, and most of them start talking about budgets each February. In the group, there is a large fear of holding a TNT hearing, so they kick the can down the road. However, one city does it every year, revisiting the issue to see where they stand.

Tyler Judkins (1806 W. 625 N., Farmington, Utah) said when he received notice of this meeting, he felt the government was trying to find a way to get into his pockets again. He has lived in Farmington for 17 years, and in his current home for eight to nine years. His taxes have gone up every year. His taxes continue to go up at the same time Farmington continues to dramatically change. He sees a whole bunch of building going on, and the increased tax revenue should offset expenses. He doesn't understand this, and the city government must operate under different guidelines than a household does, which he respects. He has a child in college and is self-employed. However, he can't ask his clients to pay him more because his own expenses have gone up. That is not how it works.

The need for police is well known, and he has respect for the police, as he doesn't want to do their jobs. He respects their sacrifice of being put in harm's way to protect him and the community. However, he has an ax to grind. Recently while completely stopped in a left hand turn lane at a red light on Park Lane and Main Street, he glanced at his phone. An officer pulled him over for operating a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle. He would have appreciated a conversation about the issue to help him understand rather than getting a ticket. The police chief respectfully responded to the situation, and stood behind the officer who had issued the ticket, as he should. However, his opinion is that the City should use the funds to hire a higher

caliber of officer than those who do petty things such as this. They are just out to get you and fishing for stuff to issue a citation. He would have had more respect if he had received a warning instead. He wants officers engaged in meaningful things to protect residents. He supports the tax increase, and appreciates the chance to be heard.

Reuben-Thomas Cowen addressed the Council, saying he doesn't have a current address. He would like to know what email to use to contact the Council, and requested that the City get unregistered agents out now, especially those who killed **Chase Allan** last year. Some in the audience yelled their approval of his statement.

Gary Daniels (159 W. Oakridge Drive, Farmington, Utah) said he has seen a lot happen in the 50 years he has lived in Farmington. He was under the understanding that the new development in Station Park and the proposed industrial park would produce sales tax revenue so that property taxes wouldn't have to be increased as proposed. He does understand how property valuations affect tax rates. However, he would like to know where the sales tax goes and how it comes to Farmington City. Station Park and Lagoon are wonderful facilities, but where does the sales tax from those facilities go? Is sales tax supplementing property taxes? He loves the police and fire departments, and they deserve to be on parity with everyone else. When does Farmington receive the benefit of all the traffic and everything that happens at Station Park, which is a wonderful place that he enjoys. It is understandable if Farmington benefits.

Debra Lynn Connor said her father served four combat tours of duty including in the Air Force, Navy, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. So, she does respect law enforcement. Expressed she is not O.K. that **Chase Allan** was murdered.

Bob McKeen (1351 N. 1670 West, Farmington, Utah) has lived in Farmington for 26 years, raising his family here. He would like TNT hearings to be held on a more frequent basis. Since he has paid off his home, his situation is different when it comes to paying his property taxes. He would like little increments that are easier to swallow compared to a big gulp. He is grateful for the police and that the tax increase will be going to them. As an engineer, he loves numbers and calculated that the increase is about \$2 to \$4 a week, which he is willing to pay. He has spent most of his career working for various federal government agencies, where he has seen inefficiencies and wastes that suck money. He would like the Council to seek to eliminate inefficiencies in order to offset tax increases or be able to send more money to police.

Loren Pierce, He spent close to two weeks with **Chase Allan**'s brother-in-law. Expressed concern over the death of **Allan**.

Kristen Sherlock (1371 Longhorn Drive, Farmington, Utah) said as a Realtor, she helps people contest their taxes. However, she is happy to support this tax increase. One of Farmington's struggles is wage stagnation. People claim housing is an affordability issue, but pay has kept stagnate, including for City Staff. People are motivated to work when they are paid well. Having conversations about needed tax increases should be done every couple of years. This is better than having conversations with pitch forks and torches.

Whitney Allen (1664 Spring Meadow Lane, Farmington, Utah) said she feels citizens don't have a say, and the Council is just informing them of what they are going to do. She asked when anyone has a say. Everyone is being hit by inflation. If she needs to buy food that now costs more, she has to cut things in her budget to afford it. What has the City cut that they don't need?

The money is not the Council's money; it is Farmington citizens' money. It feels residents have no say in where this money is going. She would like to see the line items that correspond to the percentage increase in property taxes being requested. She apologized for not trusting government. However, taxes always go up and the amount of government workers in Utah has also increased. She agrees that police should be paid well so she can be protected, but she wants to see line items and what it is going for.

Mayor Anderson closed the Public Hearing at 8:15 p.m., noting that the electronic Zoom meeting was not functioning properly for this meeting. He told the audience that the Council is listening to them and appreciates and values their comments. They have studied these issues during a six-month process, and the rest of them have had 16 days. The City needs to look into informing residents of the sewer district's public meetings, as well as other public taxing entities' meetings. He isn't even sure when and how to be involved in sewer district matters.

Mellor agreed, saying residents have representation on the sewer board and on other public bodies. Residents vote for their sewer board members, and a local representative has been elected. Some have been on the sewer board for 38 years. The sewer board positions are not well promoted, and not a lot of people campaign to be a sewer representative. **Mayor Anderson** said it would be good to publish the names of the sewer board members in an upcoming newsletter.

Councilmember **Roger Child** said Councilmembers are assigned to different county entities that have the ability to increase taxes. As such, they are in there reviewing these separate budgets in addition to the City's budget. For example, he is part of the mosquito board and is familiar with that budget. He has never seen any resident at those public meetings, even though meeting notices are published publicly.

Leeman said the reason why the sewer increase is so substantial this year is because there is a new law in effect to increase sanitation standards, affecting how clean discharged water has to be. Water now needs to be treated to a higher degree. This applies to all sewer boards across the entire State.

Mayor Anderson said the City should figure out how to be a better middle man. The constitutional concerns regarding the City's Police Department affect the insurance company's risk rating. This rating affects residents' everyday lives, as their own home and auto insurance can be directly influenced by the City's insurance rate. It is important that the City not be a dangerous place. When cities get sued, the big lawsuits usually involve constitutional claims. Cities get what they pay for. If they want bottom-of-the-barrel police officers, a City should pay less. Then they get what they pay for. That is how to deal with the risks.

Mellor said the increased revenue from the tax increase would go to pay for police wages as well as the associated payroll tax withholdings, health insurance, retirement contributions, and vehicles.

Leeman said the Council doesn't have the legal power to fence off money in the General Fund and not use it for something else. Next year, the Council could vote to reduce police wages 20%, although that is not likely. The General Fund is used for parks and recreation to keep the soccer fields and pool up, for example. Farmington could shudder the pool and save a lot of money.

This tax increase is expected to produce \$1,034,000, which is allocated to the police department for wages and to fully fund associated equipment.

Isaacson said he understands that it looks like this decision has already been made. The City does things according to State statute and therefore has to adopt their budget by the end of June. However, the TNT is supposed to be held in August, which doesn't make sense to him. Doing the budget earlier than the TNT helps them decide if a tax increase should be part of the budget. Farmington can't control State law. All Council meetings and agendas are public and published. Every document they look at is available to the public. The public can come and see every number and where every penny goes. It is totally transparent. Before he was an elected official, he never came to any of those public meetings, so he doesn't blame anyone else for doing the same. Although the Councilmembers all look at the budget line by line, he understands the perception that the decision has already been made.

Layton said is important that elected officials represent City residents, because they are willing to do the work for them. They spend hours and hours looking through thousands of documents. The finance director who prepared this budget lives in Farmington, so the taxes impact him like they do everyone else. Councilmembers live in Farmington, and the tax rates impact them and their families. This is the reason she digs through the numbers. For example, when she noticed the increase in pool fees per person, she thought about how it would affect her and her seven kids. Councilmembers want to spend taxes in the best way possible because they live here, too.

Leeman said he would rather the budget and TNT hearings be held simultaneously, because the budget drives the tax decision. The public comments that they feel the decision has been made before the hearing was held resonate with him. He has spent a decade serving on either the Council or Planning Commission, and sometimes residents have a perspective that he doesn't have. However, the Council doesn't make decisions on a whim. The residents should want the Councilmembers to come into a meeting having already studied the issues and thought about them. The Council already passed the budget, and already decided the budget needed a tax increase. In reality, the Council is trying to sell it to the public; that is how the system is set up.

Mayor Anderson noted that Farmington subsidizes parks and recreation to the tune of \$1 million per year. People from other cities come to Farmington to use their pool. Pools run at a deficit of about \$200,000 each year. There are other municipalities shutting down their pools, and these are hard questions cities have to consider. This is a policy question Farmington struggles with as well.

Layton said Councilmembers regularly visit and interact with the different departments in order to get to know the people there. They go on snow plow rides, visit the water house, watch the process needed to get water to residents' sinks etc. in order to get a deeper look into where the money goes and what the City needs. The Council is trying to represent residents.

Mayor Anderson said the Community Council is invaluable, and he invited residents to serve on it. This is a time each month for residents to come talk to Farmington department heads. They have agendas and seek resident feedback. There are ways for those who want to be more involved to have a say. In December he will send out an email inviting anyone to be part of the Community Council.

In response to **Gary Daniels'** comments, **Isaacson** said sales tax revenues from Station Park have helped Farmington not raise taxes for 13 years. It is built out now, and the City has had very little construction for the last few years. COVID hurt things, including sales taxes. Farmington planned to have big office buildings built by now to help with tax revenue. Now, there is not as much of a need for office buildings anymore. Big projects have been approved, but now interest rates are too high and sales tax revenues are not going up like they used to. Farmington has to be careful not to rely too much on sales tax, because it can fluctuate. More stable revenue is needed to fund police and fire. Farmington doesn't want to cut safety, and wants to fund it with reliable property taxes. The City was benefitted tremendously by Station Park, but sales tax has now plateaued.

Mellor said there was a time when Farmington got 1% of sales tax. If a city doesn't have a population increase as sales tax goes up, only half of 1% goes to point of sale. The other half goes to a distribution pool. For every \$100 spent in Farmington, the City gets 1%. Some cities like Fruit Heights don't have a sales tax base, so they become a distribution community. So some more populous cities help fund other cities that don't have a sales tax base.

Farmington tries to make sure public safety is paid for from stable revenue. **Mellor** doesn't fault previous City Councils, because it is virtually impossible to understand what the cost is for those sales tax collars. There are plenty of analyses prepared to predict sales tax, but there is no thought of the costs needed to bring in a shopping center and what it costs the City for its services such as helping catch shoplifters. It is hard to predict. Farmington got by for 13 years without having to raise property taxes.

Child said the City collects impact fees and sales tax from commercial development. Impact fees are designated by law to only be used to benefit the infrastructure of the City that would support new development. Farmington has funds in the bank it can't spend until a new fire station or water tank is needed. The State dictates where money can be spent. Sales tax is not increasing and the economy is being impacted all the way around. Inflation is impacting everyone's bottom lines, including the City's. Inflation has increased 25% over the last four years. Street inflation is totally different than government-published inflation. The City has not increased taxes to the level of inflation. Farmington has already shaved, cut, and eliminated any fluff in the budget.

Leeman noted that during budget preparation, Councilmembers considered a "cut list." **Mellor** said the list really includes deferred maintenance and purchases, or putting off the inevitable expenses such as vehicles. One big cut was holding off on building a State-mandated salt shed. By not installing xeriscaping around City Hall, they kick the can farther down the road. It is not necessarily that they have been cut, but that the City needs to find a better year to do it.

Leeman said xeriscaping would eventually save on water and maintenance costs, but it also costs to initially install. Therefore, the upfront costs will be paid for over time. Councilmembers look for inefficiencies, and labor is one of the biggest costs. For example, a robot that paints the lines on play fields has saved so much money, eliminating employee man hours. Years like this are good years to look at inefficiencies.

Layton noted that Fire Chief **Rich Love** had quite a few cuts to his budget. When she asked him which cut gave him the most heartburn, **Love** responded that he needed new fire hose. She didn't even know that fire hoses expire. Addressing the Council, **Love** said this year he didn't get

\$10,000 worth of fire hoses. He has a new engine coming, but not enough budget to outfit that new engine without stealing from other engines to try to satisfy State standards.

Leeman said Farmington became the fire department for Fruit Heights, and Farmington charges them more than it costs the City in order to supplement the budget. As such, Fruit Heights pays \$700,000 toward Farmington's budget. These are creative ways to handle the budget.

Mayor Anderson said we have many pockets through the City that they water and send crews to maintain, all while nobody uses them and the equipment becomes dilapidated. They are woefully underutilized assets.

Child said that Davis County should have its Western Sports Park finished by the spring. It will have eight full soccer fields, two indoor arenas, and parking for 2,000. The County has paid for changing it from traditional rodeo grounds to a more modern event center that will bring more traffic to Farmington. The City will need an increased police force to handle the daytime population. On a daily basis, more people will be coming to the City to spend their money on restaurants and shopping. This is money most cities will not receive, and Farmington will see a boost in sales tax. It may not be a tremendous increase, but it will be significant.

Mayor Anderson said Davis County told him the economic impact to the area while it was a rodeo and fairgrounds was \$3 million to \$5 million annually. As a fully functional sports park, it will be \$90 million annually. That is a huge increase from an asset that the County repurposed. There are a lot of good days ahead. But for now, the City is dealing with inflation and a police department with the lowest wages in the County.

Isaacson said the best kind of taxes are the one residents don't pay themselves, but where visitors to the City are paying the taxes.

Shumway noted that the City is taking \$1 million out of the General Fund for water, even though fees should be paying for it. Water rates are slowly increasing each year, but Farmington still has to fix water leaks and provide good water for residents. Most who spoke tonight asked for a slow, consistent tax increase, which the City is doing with its water rates. It was good feedback for the Council, who doesn't enjoy raising taxes.

Leeman said Farmington Police Department does not have a ticket quota. **Mayor Anderson** said the police operate under the philosophy not to unnecessarily write tickets, but to educate instead. **Mellor** said the ticket incident was discussed earlier, and there is more to the story. **Leeman** said he appreciates the police presence near the high school at 7:30 a.m. each school day. **Johnsen** said he makes no apologies for that.

Mayor Anderson said he was invited to a policing discussion with police chiefs from throughout the County. The global consensus is that crime, drugs, violence, and burglaries are going up as the County becomes more populated. Crime is being imported from other cities. Every City in Davis County is experiencing the same thing. They are all dealing with police wage issues and how to get a handle on it when Salt Lake and the Utah Highway Patrol (UHP) have deeper pockets and keep raising wages. It puts pressure on surrounding cities. Salt Lake and the UHP are offering to raise wages \$10 more an hour than Farmington. So, beginning officers can drive just 12 miles south and get a 30% differential, going from \$26 to \$38 an hour. These are issues the City wrestles with on an ongoing basis. Now they are poised waiting to see what

other cities are going to do in response to Farmington’s increase. Farmington needs to keep and retain officers without poaching them from other agencies.

Johnsen said Farmington should run with 35 officers, but today they have 27, going soon to 29. If the proposed tax increase doesn’t go through, he guarantees he would not be able to hire the two officers they are about to hire. **Leeman** pointed out that not all 27 are on duty at the same time, especially considering weekends and night shifts. **Johnsen** said they used to have two officers on duty from 1 to 6 a.m., but now they only have one. **Leeman** said when there is a school shooting, residents don’t want the police department to be short staffed.

Johnsen said he started working in Farmington in 2001, and it is now a very different city. **Child** said the reputation is that Farmington PD is understaffed. **Johnsen** said that from January to March of 2024, 35 cars were broken into, and guns were stolen in 15 of those cars. **Child** said Farmington residents are too trusting, and garage door openers are being stolen. There needs to be an education process.

Mayor Anderson said he prefers a proactive rather than reactive police force. It is better to prevent than spend time chasing crime. They recently picked up a California resident for shoplifting, and he was appalled that Farmington still prosecuted for shop lifting because others don’t. The Mayor wants that reputation out there so the City won’t be seen as a soft target.

Gatrell said the messaging on the tax notice was that it was for police force wages, not equipment and cars. The City has a messaging problem. **Mayor Anderson** said he is always looking for ways to better communicate with the residents, giving the information they want and need in a timely manner. He and **Mellor** will talk to Staff about how to do that using social media, websites, the newsletter, and text blasts.

Leeman said the newsletter article last month emphasized police wages. However, wages are defined by a compartmentalized employee, including benefits, which can be seen on Utah’s Right to Know website. **Child** said it includes equipment costs. When you hire someone, you have to outfit them.

Motion:

Isaacson moved that the City Council approve a resolution to formally adopt the final certified tax rate of 0.001741 as attached in the packet.

Layton seconded the motion. All Councilmembers voted in favor, as there was no opposing vote.

Mayor Pro Tempore/Councilmember Alex Leeman	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Roger Child	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Scott Isaacson	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Melissa Layton	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Amy Shumway	X Aye	___	Nay

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

Shumway made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Leeman seconded the motion. All Councilmembers voted in favor, as there was no opposing vote.

Mayor Pro Tempore/Councilmember Alex Leeman	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Roger Child	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Scott Isaacson	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Melissa Layton	X Aye	___	Nay
Councilmember Amy Shumway	X Aye	___	Nay

/s/ DeAnn Carlile

DeAnn Carlile, Recorder



DeAnn Carlile <dcarlile@farmington.utah.gov>

Budget

1 message

poohyhuey@aol.com <poohyhuey@aol.com>

Tue, Aug 20, 2024 at 3:01 PM

To: "dcarlile@farmington.utah.gov" <dcarlile@farmington.utah.gov>

Greetings. I regret not attending tonight's Budget Meeting, but we all know it is only being held because it is required. My attendance would waste your time and more importantly mine. However, I will take a moment to respond.

Shame on you folks. You are requesting a 2.5% raise?

You are raising the fees on Water, Sewer, Garbage, Storm Water and the Transportation. Not to mention 27% property tax.

In 2023 the city raised the property tax portion for Farmington City by 3.4% (27%) strickly for police and yet here we go again. 3.4% for the upcoming year.

Not to mention the fees you charge. Cell phones have a tax/fee. Utilities have a tax/fee. Extra % on sales tax. And this transportation charge. Do other cities have that? I understand why cities like Sunset and Clearfield have a high property tax but they have no commercial. We have a mall. Layton City seems to keep their property tax low. Plus, the smaller cities have no \$724,000 homes. Values in Farmington are at a premium and yet we have no money. We had enough to buy the old Heildelberg property.

While I was working for Davis County Government, the Commission needed to raise property taxes. There had been extensive flooding in the spring because of record snowpack and extreme temperatures. They felt a COLA for employees would not be in the best interest of taxpayers. So, instead of giving all employees a raise, everyone was given \$500.00. Everyone from the janitor to the elected officials. It was not a salary increase but a small token of appreciation with the explanation that the increase in property tax would take precedence.

I understand the need for police, fire and first responders deserving/needing a raise but can the city not cut back in other areas? Retreats at Bryce Canyon seem expensive. Why not BBQ's at one of our beautiful parks? Dinner at every City Council meeting?

Cut back on the fluff and make it work.

Thank you for your time and I appreciate your service.

Paulette Hewitt