

MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL RETREAT HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025, AT 8:30 A.M. AT THE MARKET STREET AND GRILL LOCATED AT 2985 EAST COTTONWOOD PARKWAY, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Present: Mayor Mike Weichers, Council Member Shawn Newell, Council Member Ellen Birrell, Council Member Suzanne Hyland, Council Member Matt Holton

Staff Present: Jared Gerber, City Manager; Executive Assistant, Tiffany Janzen; Community and Economic Development Director, Michael Johnson; Public Works Director, Matt Shipp; Police Chief, Robby Russo; Administrative and Financial Services Director, Scott Jorges; City Engineer, Ben Nelsen; Records, Culture and Human Resources Director, Barbar Higgins

1. Breakfast.

2. Welcome and Introduction.

City Manager, Jared Gerber, opened the meeting at approximately 9:11 a.m. and stated that a second half-day Retreat would be required in March.

3. Current Project Updates.

- **2024 Retreat Policies**

Mr. Gerber provided an update on the 2024 budget priorities.

- The Telecom Franchise Tax was not pursued.
- Grants were discussed in two City Council Work Sessions, and the Safe Streets and Roads for All (“SS4A”) Grant was submitted in May 2024. The Notice of Funding Opportunities for the 2025 SS4A Grant has not yet been released. The item would be added to the February Work Session so they can have everything prepared to make the submittal as soon as the notice is released. The future of SS4A grant funding was discussed, and it was noted that current grants should be secure but all future funding is in question. Council Member Newell mentioned that they should consider applying for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (“BEAD”) Grant for Wi-Fi in underserved areas.
- The discussed tax increase did not move forward.
- The Utah State Legislature road funding options are being pursued, and the Transportation Utility Fee will be discussed later in the meeting.
- Pavement recommendations were all completed.

- The Valley Emergency Communications Center (“VECC”) fee increase was completed as part of the budget.
- The Unified Fire Authority (“UFA”) contract increase was completed as part of the budget.
- Staff compensation was completed as part of the budget.
- The Siesta Drive storm drain and lighting project is complete.
- An update was given on the Sidewalk Construction Project on 2300 East. Funding was applied for but a decision will not be made until Spring. They will review it with the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) on February 11, 2025.
- Other sidewalk construction projects included the following:
 - A. 7425 South Creek Road
 - B. 2175 East Creek Road
 - C. 2315 East to 2397 East
 - D. 2653 East to 2723 East
 - E. Wasatch Boulevard near Greenhills Drive
 - Items A and B received funding at a 60/40 split, which requires \$100,000 in matching City funds. All other items were denied grant funding.
- Hillside Plaza is in the Request for Proposals (“RFP”) process.
- The Bonneville Shoreline Trailhead project is in process.
- The East Jordan Canal Trailhead Study was completed and presented on October 1, 2024.
- The Community Room floor replacement did not move forward.
- A permanent Emergency Management position was discussed at two City Council Work Sessions and a plan was to be presented in the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.
- The Wasatch Boulevard Master Plan Update was approved on November 19, 2024.
- With regard to the Senior Center, the City is moving forward with plans for a monthly activity at City Hall beginning with bingo on February 19, 2025. Staff will be meeting with the Salt Lake County Health Department to partner on Aging and Adult Services, and discussions will continue with Recreation Center staff to find ways to incorporate their programs. Council Member Newell stated that he works with a nonprofit organization that

does a podcast and television show for the aging population, and they may be able to advertise the monthly activities there. Mr. Gerber stated that he would ask Culture Manager, Ann Eatchel, to follow up with him. Mayor Weichers indicated that they should introduce the plan for monthly activities and announce the first event on social media.

- The Traffic Calming and Sidewalk Study was not funded.
- The Community Reinvestment Area (“CRA”) taxing area was created. Community and Economic Development Director, Michael Johnson, stated that they will begin negotiating with the taxing entities once a development partner is selected. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Administrative and Financial Services Director, Scott Jorges, stated that the current contract is with Zions Bank, and they grandfathered in with Birmingham on existing projects like Canyon Center.
- A Consulting Contract for the designation of roundabout intersections was approved on September 17, 2024, and the study is underway. The report is being finalized, and Public Works Director, Matt Shipp, expects to present it to the Council within one to two months. Council Member Birrell asked for a future discussion on how the 2300 East and Fort Union Boulevard projects interface with the SS4A Grant implementation.
- The Parking 2.0 study was completed and reviewed by the City Council. It concluded that the amount of parking in office areas is sufficient, and it is important to maintain the current number of spaces to entice long-term tenants. Parking concepts were also included in the Form-Based Code discussions.
- The Salt Lake County Health Department’s Healthy City Program was pursued and the City received \$96,000 for implementation. A full-time Coordinator was hired, and a committee meeting was held the previous Monday. Interviews were scheduled for three additional committee members and Council Members Newell and Birrell have volunteered to assist.
- Walkability, neighborhood byways, Prospector Drive reconstruction, and active transportation projects were completed. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Council Member Birrell stated that a kickoff event was held in November and the subcommittee is discussing doing more in 2025. Mayor Weichers stated that events should be broadcast on social media and every effort should be made to get the information out to residents. Council Member Birrell discussed the Parks, Trails, and Open Space (“PTOS”) Committee’s current priorities.
- The Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Region 2 Director Strategy was to request regular meetings with Region 2 Director, Robert Stewart. Mr. Stewart did not want to do so, but the City does meet monthly with the UDOT Project Manager and his team.

- Staff has met with property owners and their representatives regarding the Gravel Pit/UDOT intermodal hub, and they are seeking state funding. Council Member Birrell asked if the Council would be involved in discussions about plans for that 120-acre parcel. Mr. Johnson stated that the Wasatch Boulevard Master Plan includes a section on that development and recommended discussing the current policy documents at a Council meeting.
- The office space and retail occupancy level analysis was incorporated into the Parking 2.0 study.
- The hiring of a full-time Grant Writer was discussed and rejected at the 2024 Retreat. The Council instead directed Staff to prepare a spreadsheet outlining all current grants. That was not completed. However, Mr. Shipp would review outstanding Public Works grants later in the meeting.
- On-street parking restrictions were scheduled for a February 2025 Work Session. Council Members Hyland and Holton discussed areas that need parking restrictions.
- The Creek Road West Annexation is proceeding. Council Member Hyland reported that there are issues due to the three parcels that were annexed into Sandy. Creek Road East needs additional signatures and review.
- A committee has been formed to consider short-term rental regulations and a Town Hall Meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.
- Discussion of the rental of home and backyard spaces is scheduled for a February 2025 Work Session. Council Member Hyland stated that the problem will continue to increase, and the Council needed to discuss this commercialization of residential areas and reach a consensus as to how to address the issue.
- The Crestwood Park Swimming Pool Project is in process. Council Member Holton stated that discussions are continuing with Salt Lake County to determine the best long-term plan.
- The Sister City relationship was established and a request would be made for funding in FY 2026.
- Roadway redesign has been incorporated into the pavement recommendations and is part of the Safety Action Plan request for FY 2026.
- The City's Wayfinding Master Plan and Design Guide were discussed at a City Council Meeting. Mr. Shipp reported that they have used a similar wayfinding sign aesthetic on recent projects, and the Wayfinding Master Plan would standardize the template for all trail, park, and amenity signage. It has not yet been implemented.

- **Public Works**

City Engineer, Ben Nelsen presented the Engineering Project Status Report.

Projects In Construction

- 1700 East Sidewalk: The final walkthrough was scheduled and Cape Seal was added to the 2026 Road Maintenance Plan. Council Member Holton received feedback that the projects are a hodgepodge of patching. Mr. Nelsen agreed that 700 East is a hodgepodge. The project was completed too late in the year for cape seal, so temporary striping was installed. It will be cape-sealed and restriped in the Spring. Some projects have a very limited scope due to budgetary constraints. Council Member Holton encouraged the Council to consider how to complete projects holistically whenever possible. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Nelsen indicated that they would notify residents 30 days in advance for future projects.
- Fort Union Multiuse Trail: The project is substantially complete. Landscaping and some minor punch list items will be completed in the Spring. The contractor on the project is RC Enterprise. There were delays, but Mr. Nelsen was happy with their work. Mr. Shipp stated that they were the low bid and may not have been the best contractor for that project, but he planned to continue using them on projects for which they are well-suited.
- Supernal Storm Drain: The project is complete pending restoration of a resident's landscaping in the Spring.

Projects In Design

- Kings Hill Drive Storm Drain: The Project Design is 60% complete and they anticipate requesting proposals in late January or early February. In response to a question from Council Member Birrell, Mr. Nelsen stated that the Supernal project cost is approximately \$250,000. They intend to complete this project in sections, and their goal is to complete it in Spring 2025 before there is more damage from runoff. Mr. Shipp added that they would develop a traffic control plan and communicate their plans to residents. The project will be completed faster if they close the road. Some of the decay on the pipes is due to the lack of wing walls, so those will be installed to better channel the flow.
- Steffensen Rebuild: CMT has been selected for this project, and the contract will be presented to the Council for consideration at its January 21, 2025 meeting.

Studies

- Scottish Drive: Bowen Collins and Associates ("BCA") is finalizing a study on storm drain deficiencies in this area. Recommended projects include pipe size upgrades and manhole increases.

- Storm Drain Master Plan: BCA has been selected to update the Master Plan and storm drain model, and that agreement will be presented to the Council for review once Staff receives additional information. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Shipp stated that the camera project is being completed in pieces. The Storm Water Fee has been helpful, but urgent repairs like Creek Road and the Supernal storm drain have prevented them from being able to complete the project. They will likely bring a proposal for completing the camera project to the Council for review in the Fall. That proposal will also cover the required equipment and personnel.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Jorges reported that the Storm Water Fund is budgeted to end the year with a remaining balance of approximately \$500,000 as expected. That amount will ensure that no additional money needs to be transferred from the General Fund to cover unexpected expenses. Mr. Shipp stated that the Master Plan will enable Staff to plan for and set aside monies for the Storm Water Fund so they can stop borrowing from the General Fund.

In response to a question from Council Member Birrell, Mr. Shipp stated that the Master Plan will create a five-year Capital Facilities Plan indicating the projects that should be completed in the next five years so the Council will know the expected budget. Unexpected problems may still require transfers from the General Fund.

Mayor Weichers asked the Council to pay close attention to the current issues because they do not know the condition of much of the corrugated steel pipe and there is the potential for multiple failures. Council Member Holton asked if they should be allocating more resources to repair the pipes sooner. Mr. Shipp stated that the Council was wise to create the Storm Water Fee, and they will address the issues within the five-year plan. Mayor Weichers stated that the camera project should be a priority. If extra money needs to be allocated to determine the condition of the City's storm water system, that should be done. Mr. Shipp stated that that was the priority prior to the Creek Road issue. The house at the bottom of Pepper's Hill flooded twice, and they had to shift priorities and repair that issue. The priority will be to flush and camera the pipes.

In response to a question from Council Member Birrell, Mr. Shipp stated that he could not provide an estimate of the percentage of pipes that had been completed. It is done when they find problems. The City has not requested proposals to video the entire system, but that could cost more than \$175,000. The Master Plan contains both maintenance and capital plans. The capital plan considers improvements and replacements based on volume, capacity, and size. The maintenance plan considers things like replacing existing pipes with reinforced concrete. In response to a follow-up question, Mr. Shipp reported that the Pepper's Hill problem was based on inlet capacity. The 60-inch pipe at the top of the hill had also rotten out and had to be replaced. The issue was not related to new housing in the area. New projects are required to build to their impacts.

Mayor Weichers suggested that the Council consider using Storm Water funds to hire a contractor to flush and camera the pipes. Mr. Shipp will consult with Mr. Jurges and prepare an RFP.

- SS4A: Staff has prepared a Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) for the citywide Transportation Safety Action Plan that will be presented to the Council in February. Approximately \$400,000 in grant funds were received which require a \$100,000 City match. If the Council approves the funding, Staff will move forward with the RFQ. The grant was for 2700 East, a portion of Highland, and part of Fort Union Boulevard, but the federal government agreed that the City could do a citywide action plan using these funds. The proposal will be for a citywide plan specific to Cottonwood Heights. During the day’s budget discussion, they would consider the required matching funds.
- Danish Speed Study: Staff is working on a signage and striping plan to address speeds on Danish Road. The effect of any changes will be compared to the speed review that was conducted in 2024. Council Member Birrell stated that the project is urgent because the current conditions present a safety hazard. Council Member Holton stated that residents of Greenfield Way asked if a similar study could be conducted there. Mr. Shipp indicated that the temporary speedbumps and speed tests could be installed, but they should wait until Spring to conduct the study. Greenfield Way has radar signs that are currently capturing data. The machines need to run for a few more weeks, after which he will provide data to the Council. He asked that the Council Members keep in mind that when the studies indicate a need, the City has not budgeted for those items, so sometimes that need does not result in a solution.

Grants and Federal Projects

- Creek Road Sidewalk: A \$150,000 grant was received, but additional discussion was necessary regarding the required \$112,000 in matching funds. Staff believes the actual cost will be approximately \$100,000, but the City is required to cover 40% of the cost. The City has a right-of-way for this project.
- Highland and Bengal Intersection Redesign: H.W. Lochner was selected to perform the redesign, and Staff held a kickoff meeting with UDOT and Lochner. The contract should be finalized in late January. Mr. Shipp reviewed the changes included in the redesign. In response to concerns expressed by Council Member Birrell, Mr. Shipp stated that the design would be discussed with the Council prior to finalization, and he would ensure that UDOT and Lochner address her concerns.
- Highland Trail Phase 1: County funds were received to install an eight- to ten-foot pedestrian trail from Butler Hills Drive to Bengal Hills Cove. The scope and fee will be presented to the Council as soon as it is received from H.W. Lochner. A City match is not required, but Staff estimates that approximately \$600,000 will be necessary to complete the project. This phase of the trail is on the east side of Bengal Boulevard. Once it crosses Fort Union Boulevard, it moves to the west side.

- Highland Trail Phase 2: This phase will extend the trail from Bengal Hills Cove to Fort Union Boulevard. Almost \$2 million was received for the project, and the City match will be approximately \$141,000. The Council and Staff discussed the different phases of the trail and how it will connect with other trails. Council Member Holton stated that the Council should consider whether they should be building new trails when the City’s basic infrastructure is in disrepair.
- Highland Trail Phase 3: This phase will extend the trail from Fort Union Boulevard to I-215 and include the redesign of the intersection of Highland Drive and La Cresta Drive. H. W. Lochner has been selected for the design, and the Council will be considering that agreement at its January 21, 2025 meeting.

Outside Projects

- Cottonwoods Connection: Metro Water will be installing water pipes on Fort Union Boulevard, Nutree Drive, and Danish Road through 2026.
- UDOT: 21798 Fort Union Boulevard and Wasatch Boulevard will be redesigned. They are early in the design process.
- UDOT: 21844 Bengal Boulevard and Wasatch Boulevard will have a redesign of the semaphore system.
- **Community and Economic Development**

Mr. Johnson reviewed the department’s ongoing projects and noted that day-to-day projects and future projects that will be initiated by property owners were not included in the list. He anticipates that the Gravel Pit and Old Mill projects will begin within the next year.

- General Plan update: Additional funding was acquired from the Wasatch Front Regional Council (“WFRC”) and the State of Utah to complete the update in 2025. It will include mandated updates to the moderate-income housing element and the adoption of a water element. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Johnson stated that water is a state-mandated element of the plan that considers water usage, how the land development pattern affects water usage, and the City’s water conservation policies.
- Town Center: The RFP will close in two weeks, after which the City will select and contract with a development partner. Additional updates will be provided in a Closed Session at the next City Council Meeting.
- Form-Based Code: Staff is consolidating and incorporating the Council’s comments, and the matter will be brought to a future Work Session for further discussion.

- Canyon Center CDA: They are currently working to amend the interlocal agreements with taxing entities and anticipate receipt of the Building Permit application in mid-2025.
- Natural Trail Access: This includes the Bonneville Shoreline Trail and Deaf Smith Canyon. They are continuing to work on the projects, and a more detailed update will be provided during the Closed Session.
- Ferguson Trail Circulation and Signage: There has been some direction to work with the County to modify the parking area and alleviate circulation concerns.
- Canyon Center Park or Plaza Design: A survey was sent out and good responses were received. Staff will bring the Concept Plan to the Council for review. The agreement states that the park must be completed no later than one year after the condominiums are finished. It will be constructed by CW Management using Tax-Increment Financing (“TIF”) funds.
- Fort Union Boulevard Bike Lane: This project is substantially complete.
- Utah Renewable Communities: Cottonwood Heights participates in the community renewable energy program, and an update will be presented to the Council in February. Council Member Holton provided background on the program.
- Sustainability Seminars: This will be an ongoing community education program that covers sustainability topics. Staff is working with Council Member Birrell on the project.
- Sister Cities: Support of this program so far has included meetings with the delegation.
- Annexation Petitions: They are assisting with GIS mapping to ensure that the data is accurate.
- Dover Hill Park: The park is currently under construction. Per the Development Agreement, Ivory Homes is required to complete it by September 2025.
- City Events: They will continue to work on City events, including the community tree sale.
- South Valley Chamber: They will continue to participate in Chamber training and leadership programs and attend their meetings, particularly the Ambassador Committee and Women in Business Committee.

Mr. Johnson reported that all the above projects are fully funded, so the department’s ongoing commitment will be in staff allocation and time.

The PTOS Committee’s requests were reviewed next.

- Budget Request: Fund the completion of the Mountview Pollinator Garden at a cost of approximately \$65,000.
- Moving forward, they have requested a dedicated PTOS Fund with a suggested annual contribution of \$100,000. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Johnson stated that some local projects are hard to fund with grants. Things like replacing specific playground equipment but not the entire playground, routine maintenance, neighborhood byways, etc., are harder to fund with grants. A local fund would also help with matching funds for any grants that could be obtained.
- Trails:
 - Their number one trail priority is the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.
 - Little Cottonwood Canyon: The committee is interested in looking at grants to develop the open space with a trailhead.
 - East Jordan Canal Trail: This is the Committee’s third priority.
- Parks:
 - They recommended finishing the Pollinator Garden project.
 - They requested consideration of the ongoing Parks, Trails, and Open Space Fund.
 - They would like to create opportunities for other mid-block park crossings like the one at Mountview Park. Berry Hill Park is a small park adjacent to the trail through the corporate center, which connects to the Big Cottonwood Canyon Trail. They would like this location to be considered for a mid-block crossing.
 - Over the next several years, they will be looking at a master plan for Mountview Park, and they believe that will be a good opportunity to reassess needs at the park. They believe Mountview Park would be a good location for an all-abilities playground.
- The Active Transportation Subcommittee recommends that the Council take steps to build on existing plans to create a multiuse sidewalk along Bengal Boulevard to City Hall. They would like to be part of the discussions about active transportation access in the Town Center area.

Break

4. Review of Five-Year Financial Projections and Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Jurges reviewed the Five-Year Projections and reported that the City will pay off the Hillside Plaza bond this year. The current year transfer of \$1.1 from the General Fund to the Community Development and Renewal Agency (“CDRA”) will no longer be required. Debt service of \$1.5 million will also be refunded back to the General Fund. That results in a one-time increase of approximately \$2.5 million to the General Fund balance, which will help offset rising expenses.

Projected lease revenue from the Hillside Plaza project was not included because those numbers were unknown. It is not yet known whether there will only be land leases or also buildings that would increase both lease revenue and expenses.

The budgeting beginning and ending fund balances were reviewed, as well as projected actuals. The projected actual General Fund balance is \$7.9 million, whereas \$4.6 million was budgeted. The difference includes \$2.5 million for the Hillside Plaza bond, as well as an expected underspend for the year. Mr. Jurges noted that underspends cannot be budgeted and often account for the difference between budgeted and actual ending Fund balances.

The budgeted Rate of Change for FY 2025 is expected to be an approximately \$2.9 million Use of Fund Balance. That amount is expected to increase yearly because, although sales tax increases are anticipated, no or minimal property tax increase is currently expected. Expenditures tend to increase by 2% to 3% per year. If sales tax revenues come in much higher than expected as they did a few years ago, that would lower the Use of Fund Balance.

Mr. Jurges reviewed graphs including actual and estimated revenues and expenses for Hillside Plaza. Lease revenue was originally anticipated to begin between July 2026 and June 2027, but because building is not expected to begin until 2027, those numbers were modified to project revenues to begin one year out. The graph assumes land leases only. If the City owns any of the buildings, that revenue would increase. The City is in a better position than anticipated during the bond presentation in July 2024. However, if expenses are higher than expected it will affect all estimates. Mr. Jurges noted that he included a 2% Cost of Living Adjustment (“COLA”) even though the actual CPI came in at 2.9% because the actuals were not received until after the Staff Report was prepared.

Mr. Jurges stated that the 2018 tax increase resulted in additional revenues of \$921,000. At the time, the General Fund balance was approximately \$250,000. The tax increase was to make expenses and revenues equal, so no funds were added to the General Fund balance. Under-expenditures helped increase the balance, and then sales tax revenue increased exponentially. In FY 2020, the City also received \$721,000 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act funding. Approximately \$2.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) funds were received in 2022 and 2023. Mr. Jurges reviewed the trajectory both with and without those additional funds, as well as the anticipated future trajectory.

Council Member Birrell asked if an analysis was available for another five to 10 years out. Mr. Jurges stated that projections are not reliable so far in the future, and even years four and five of the five-year projections can be unreliable. Council Member Hyland added that projections are usually only reliable for about 18 months.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Jurges clarified that if lease revenue is in place starting in FY 2027/2028, the City should be in a good financial position until approximately 2029. The projections will be refined as they get closer to that date as there are many variables. For example, the County has not assessed the 5th Fifth sales tax, which could be up to \$500,000.

Break/Lunch

Mr. Jurges continued reviewing the Five-Year Projections and Capital Improvement Plan and noted that the COVID-related funds received by the City allowed them to increase the General Fund Balance by a large amount. When the 13% property tax increase was enacted in 2018, it increased revenues by \$921,000. A 1% property tax increase generates approximately \$80,000, and property taxes are usually increased every five years. It was noted that Cottonwood Heights is affected by several taxing entities, and residents generally believe the City has increased property taxes when in fact most increases are from the District.

Council Member Newell stated that he would hate for Cottonwood Heights to fall into a trap like South Salt Lake City did a couple of years ago where they had to enact a very large tax increase. He asked how they could avoid that type of situation. Mr. Jurges stated that the budgeted rate of change in 2028 is projected at over \$4 million. In order to balance the budget at that time, they will need to find \$4 million in revenue. That could require a 50% tax increase just to balance the budget. However, some things can be done to improve that ratio. If stormwater needs are not as high as anticipated, they may be able to transfer less to the Stormwater Fund. The drawback to allowing the General Fund balance to get as high as it did is that the trajectory will drop at a quicker pace, which may require a large property tax increase. They should consider whether it would make more sense to have smaller, more frequent increases or find other sources of revenue like a telecom tax or transportation tax. It would be better to flatten out the ratio between revenues and expenses to prevent freefall and draconian measures to correct it.

Mayor Weichers reminded the Council that they passed a resolution encouraging the County to implement the 5th Fifth as the legislature authorized them to do. That is a County-managed tax increase that could provide \$500,000 per year in additional revenue. Council Member Newell stated that even if it is implemented, a City-level tax increase will still be necessary in the future. If Hillside Plaza is further delayed, the trajectory will drop sooner. It was noted that there are a lot of worthy projects, but they needed to prioritize infrastructure, so those projects may have to wait.

Council Member Birrell agreed with Council Member Newell and commended Staff for advancing the idea of a five-year plan as it gives them the ability to respond with specifics when constituents ask about the City's plans. Mr. Jurges referred to the city of North Las Vegas, which has a Capital Projects Plan. Each project is outlined in detail, what the project is and whether it is possible to obtain grants or other funding, then put it in the schedule for the desired year. An emergency repair might reset the clock and require them to push those plans out. He can plan for the financial side, but he does not have Mr. Shipp's vision related to what needs to be done in the City. Getting that vision down in a plan helps Staff and the Council figure things out moving forward. Council Member Newell stated that he liked the idea of the Capital Projects Plan because it gives the City goals to strive for and also provides information they can pass on to residents about those goals. Mr. Jurges stated that they could expand it beyond traditional Public Works capital projects and include things like computer or software upgrades.

5. Compensation Discussion.

- **Overview of Considerations**

Mr. Gerber reported that Staff needs to study compensation in more detail over the next year as they have not yet found a way to create substantial savings. He reported that Maria Devereaux has resigned, and Tiffany Janzen has been covering her responsibilities. He proposed that Ms. Janzen be appointed City Recorder in addition to her position as Executive Assistant and noted that the matter would be brought before the Council at its next meeting. Ms. Devereaux's position was reclassified down to Human Resources Analyst, making the change budget neutral, and the Human Resources Analyst position is currently open. Samantha DeSeelhorst has accepted a position with the WFRC but will remain with Cottonwood Heights through the end of the month.

- **Proposed Changes**

Council Member Holton stated that he and Council Member Hyland have discussed compensation in detail. Their goal is to ensure that they have the resources to take care of the City's needs while also ensuring that they are a good steward of the taxpayer. At the end of every year, employees can cash in unused vacation hours. He was initially not in favor of this, but it only accounts for approximately \$75,000 of the staffing budget each year. He wants to be respectful to Staff, but he believes the Council should have more control over merit increases. The step program is more of an automatic increase, and he believes they should have the ability to offer increases based on merit.

Council Member Hyland did not realize that the payout at the end of the year is not incentivized at 100%. For the first seven years of service, it is 50%, and it caps out at 80% after 15 years. Many employees do not feel that they can take all their vacation time due to the demands of their jobs, and she believes they should at least be compensated for that.

Mr. Gerber expressed his appreciation for their input and honesty because it helped him understand everyone's position. They want to review the step program, and Staff was not opposed to having a range for each position, but they need time to study the issue and ensure that everyone has the proper title and is in the right range before they make that change. They could look at revising it this year, but they would need to do a market study in 2027 to ensure everyone is in the right area. He did not believe the change would save money in 2026 unless the Council decided to forego merit increases. Council Member Hyland expressed concern about morale. She believes they need a comprehensive plan that is presented as a way to help everyone's objectives.

Council Member Holton stated that he would like the following to be prioritized:

- Future of the step program.
- Analysis of what other cities are doing regarding the rate of accrual for paid time off ("PTO").
- Getting people back in the office full-time.

Council Member Hyland discussed the possibility of a four-day workweek, or perhaps nine nine-hour days, and every other Friday off. She indicated that if they require all employees to come back to the office, there should be a benefit to them.

Council Member Birrell stated that everyone should not be treated the same. When you have a highly valued, trustworthy employee who demonstrates all the elements you need for that position, you want to do what you need to keep them. You would not make the same offer to a new applicant, but she believes it may be a mistake to require all employees to be in the office 100% of the time. She believes that the decision should be at the discretion of the City Manager and Human Resources Director.

Mayor Weichers expressed understanding of employees' needs; For example, the City can be flexible in allowing someone to work from home if their child is sick. However, it is a service-based municipality, and he believes employees should be back at City Hall fulltime.

Council Member Newell stated that he agreed somewhat, but the environment is different now. People want flexibility, and it becomes harder to fill open positions if they do not have options. That includes compensation. People are very savvy now. They consider all the elements of a position, and they have a lot of criteria for a job. He believes it would be helpful to collect data from other municipalities and get a feel for what candidates are asking for. He does not want the City to have a revolving door of unhappy employees. That can be very costly, and they need to be careful in making the decision.

Council Member Holton stated that they needed to have all the incentives in the right place. He did not like the notion of allowing people to work from home while also being able to cash out unused PTO. He does not believe most people are abusing that system, but he wanted to ensure that the incentives are aligned to encourage the right behaviors.

Council Member Hyland stated that she would not support a five-day workweek. A supervisor can easily assess whether an employee is getting their work done. If they are required to be in the office five days each week, incredibly talented people will be alienated and removed from the City's potential workforce.

Mr. Gerber clarified that only a couple of employees currently worked from home more than one day per week. It is position-based and discretionary to the supervisor, and he believes it is working well. He believes some procedures need to be tightened to ensure that employees are doing what they are supposed to do when working from home, and that they are reachable and responsible, but that can be accomplished by laying out a clear policy.

Council Member Hyland urged the Council not to alienate young mothers and prevent them from being able to stay in their careers.

Police Chief, Robby Russo, stated that both Police Officers and civilian Police Department employees work four 10-hour days. They do not have turnover or issues with recruiting, and the department is never closed. Council Member Newell noted that a staggered four-day week would prevent gaps.

Mr. Johnson stated that more flexibility aids in recruitment, especially for high-level, specialized positions. He can attribute flexibility in allowing current employees to work from home to their longevity with the City. He likes the idea of having discretion as a supervisor.

Records, Culture and Human Resources Director, Barbara Higgins, reported that statistically, being able to work remotely is the second-most important consideration for job seekers behind salary. It is a recruiting tool that can either hurt or help you.

Mayor Weichers asked about controls. His wife works from home and must be logged into the computer system during work hours. If she is not logged in, a supervisor checks in to see why.

Council Member Holton reported that he recently rented the Cullimore Community Room for one day. When he went to make the payment at City Hall, the front desk was closed because someone was working from home. He did not understand how that position could work from home.

Mr. Shipp stated that he worked in a city that offered four 10-hour days, and it was a benefit. His opinion was that if the City offers that schedule, it should be the only schedule. It would bother him to go into City Hall just to be told that it is not open. From a construction standpoint, studies have shown that more work is performed during a four-10 workweek than five-eight because they do not have the extra day of startup and preparation time. The Public Works operations and maintenance staff cannot work from home. However, if someone in the office has a sick child or other issue, he appreciates having the flexibility to allow them to work from home. Each situation is unique, but if the Public Works Department went to a four-day work week, they would need to be closed on the fifth day because they do not have sufficient staff to rotate through the front desk.

In response to a question from Council Member Holton, Mr. Shipp stated that some studies do indicate an issue with burnout. Ten-hour days would mean they open an hour earlier and close an hour later, which would be a benefit for the public. Currently, if someone wants to pull a permit, they need to leave work early.

Council Member Holton stated that his preference for in-person work is not completely about productivity. He is a fan of having teams together, and allowing employees to work from home means they spend less time together. Mr. Gerber stated they could set specific work-from-home days, perhaps in the middle of the week. There is a benefit in recruiting and retaining employees to allow work from home. He noted that tech companies are going back to work five days a week, but he believes that is a soft workforce reduction effort.

In response to a question from Council Member Holton, Mr. Gerber stated that Staff will work to bring a compensation plan to the Council in March.

Mayor Weichers stated that services should be offered to the public Monday through Friday. Mr. Gerber suggested staffing for permitting, licensing, payments, etc., but not requiring a full staff on Fridays.

In response to a question from Council Member Holton regarding emergencies, Mr. Johnson stated that in emergencies they inspect the work after hours and give clearance, and then the permit can be picked up afterward. The types of permits that are issued over the counter are limited. The application process is online, and the plan review process for most applications takes three to five days. They could create a policy to accommodate building inspections on Fridays even if Staff is not in the office. Most service requests on Fridays are pet license renewals and cash-receiving services.

Mr. Shipp stated that in some cities he has worked in, they would work four 10-hour days in the summer and five eight-hour days in the winter. That schedule would work better for the Public Works Department because of the limited daylight in the winter. Mr. Gerber stated that the policy would be written to allow that flexibility.

Mr. Gerber clarified that the four-day work week was being considered in exchange for other items being removed from the compensation package. He has discussed the possibility with the department heads, and they believe many employees would take advantage of it. They have discussed rotating department heads as well or keeping them in the office on Fridays to handle big issues. If there is a way to make it work, it would be a benefit to employees and a good tradeoff for lowering PTO caps or adjusting the buyout. His concern is that if he changes everything requested, it will take away benefits with no tradeoff incentive.

Council Member Birrell stated that she would be surprised if anyone on the Council would find it acceptable for the public to come to City Hall during normal business hours and have no one available to help them. She believes there needs to be a presence in the front of the building, but back-of-house positions that do not normally interact with the public could have more flexibility.

Mayor Weichers noted that vacations can be harder to cover with a four-day workweek. However, if the public is not affected, he is amenable to the change and would like to see the proposal. Mr. Gerber stated that they could enact a similar policy to the one for working from home; if someone takes vacation, others in the department will need to cover them. It would be a right, not a benefit.

The difference between the step program and a merit program was discussed. The step program is guaranteed, whereas the merit system is determined by the City Council every year. For example, a 3% COLA increase would go to all employees in the range, but a 3% merit increase would increase each department's salary budget. Then, based on reviews, the department head could determine if the employee will receive a 1%, 2%, or 3% increase. The department head would have discretion to give a star employee a slightly larger increase if they had the funds remaining in the budget to do so, or withhold a percentage of an employee's increase pending improvement in certain areas by their six-month review. If an employee is given more or less than a 3% increase, Mr. Gerber would expect a report justifying that action. Currently, a top performer could receive the same increase as a low performer, so this system would provide more incentive to perform. Council Member Holton expressed support for giving department heads that discretion. Mayor Weichers stated that if they conduct biannual reviews, employees will be aware of what they need to improve, and he was also in favor of that. Mr. Gerber clarified that the policy would apply to non-sworn personnel only.

Mr. Shipp stated that he has worked with both systems, and they need to implement a true evaluation system. Currently, the evaluations are not detailed, and raises are based on whether they meet expectations. Directors and supervisors will need training to ensure that the raises are truly based on merit and not relationships. Mayor Weichers stated that the most effective processes he has seen have involved the employees grading themselves in certain categories. The manager then reviews and comments on their self-evaluation. That allows you to see how they see themselves versus how you see them and address specific issues. Mr. Gerber agreed that there should be a system in place for training and oversight. Mr. Shipp agreed and noted that his preferred system involves three reviews: employee, supervisor, and director.

Chief Russo stated that he has worked with that model. The supervisor would do the evaluation and present it to a board of other sergeants, who would then reach a consensus on every area. He would be provided with a top percentage, and he could decide on the exact percentage increase based on that consensus. The Chief would review it and could change the percentage based on things that might not be known to the board such as disciplinary actions. There were both positive and negative impacts from this process. It caused some problems with people who had been with the department longer, but it was a rewards system. Mr. Shipp stated that they needed to be cautious and have checks in place if they opted for that system because the process can lend itself to favoritism. Ms. Higgins reported that the current evaluation software does have that ability. The employee performs a self-evaluation, which the supervisor then discusses with them.

Mr. Jurgens stated that if a department has 10 or more employees, there will be a variety of performance levels in the department. However, there are only three people in the Finance Department. He and Treasurer, David Muir, are both at the top of the range, so the only employee who is eligible for a merit increase is Accounting Manager, Kristina Mathers. She is a very high-performing employee, but he would be unable to give her more than a 3% increase, so they would need to develop a policy for handling that situation.

Mr. Gerber would further research the matter and bring it back before the Council in March.

6. Strategic Initiative Discussion.

Mr. Gerber reported that they will not discuss each program in detail, but he would provide an overview to determine the Council's priorities so Staff can study needs and assign items to Work Sessions for deeper discussion.

Revenue Options

- Telecom Franchise Tax: Council Member Hyland stated that she is more open to this option than she was previously. Council Member Newell stated that timing is everything and expressed concern about the optics. Mayor Weichers agreed. Council Member Holton and Council Member Birrell were not in favor of the tax. It was decided that this option would not be pursued for FY 2026.

- Grants: Mr. Gerber expressed concern with grants due to the matching funds requirements. They are at the point where they will either have to commit funds to the current Public Works grants or turn down the funding. Mayor Weichers mentioned the Communication with Computers grant, and Mr. Gerber confirmed that they will be meeting with Comcast. He asked that the Council forward information on any new grants as they receive it.
- Hillside Plaza Bond: Staff has met with some developers regarding the RFP. No submissions have been received, but that is not unusual. They have been giving more thought to whether it will be a land lease or partnership. As they talked with developers, they realized that there is a potential for a greater return with a partnership.

Council Member Hyland pointed out that there are also potential downsides, and she was unsure if a municipality should put itself in that position. Mayor Weichers stated that the return is based on the commercial and retail spaces being leased. If the project is fully leased, they would have the opportunity to more than double the land lease revenue. Revenue could decrease if it is not fully leased, but developers have expressed willingness to set minimums. The benefit to the developer is that the City would donate the land.

Council Member Newell asked about operations and maintenance costs. Mr. Gerber stated that they need to research those details. They had not considered a partnership until potential development partners brought it up. The developers will propose what they believe is the best arrangement, and whether the City is responsible for maintenance or will simply receive a percentage of the net revenue would need to be determined.

Council Member Birrell stated that the original concept was that small businesses could open in the plaza. She was concerned that if it was too large, they would not get mom-and-pops, and only large, national companies could afford to be in Hillside Plaza. The community has expressed the desire for small, locally owned businesses, and she feels it is important to structure it so that it is not prohibitively expensive for the end lessee. Mr. Gerber pointed out that the City would have less control over a land lease than if they had a partnership where they could potentially give up a percentage of profit to subsidize rents for those small businesses. Council Member Birrell stated that she asked Midvale how they did it with their Main Street, and their staff had a lot of leeway in that area. She wanted to ensure that it is set up in a way that allows them to be able to entice those businesses to Hillside Plaza and control the mix at the Town Center.

Mayor Weichers stated that they have had that exact conversation with developers, and the consensus has been that there needs to be a mix of small, medium, and large businesses. He added that he has been very impressed with the broker, Mountain Wes, and every developer they have met with who has worked with them has also spoken highly of them.

- State Legislature Road Funding: This is now referred to as 5th Fifth and was discussed earlier in the meeting.

- Transportation Utility Fee: Mr. Shipp reported that an RFP has been prepared but not released. Legislation was proposed regarding the Transportation Utility Fee in the last legislative session based on Pleasant Grove’s lawsuit, and they believe the legislation will pass this year. The RFP is based on the bill that did not pass, and Staff is ready to release it at the Council’s direction.

In response to a question from Council Member Holton, it was noted that the fee would likely be billed monthly, similar to the Stormwater Fee. Mr. Jurgens stated that if the City is responsible for billing, it would not be monthly because mailings cost approximately \$1 per bill. It would likely be a quarterly bill. If billed through Rocky Mountain Power, it would either be included in their \$5,000 per month fee or incur an additional fee. They would need to analyze which option is most feasible. It was decided that they would wait until the legislation was passed before moving forward. In response to a question from Council Member Birrell, Mr. Shipp stated that the fees vary widely by municipalities and are based on the analysis that is required prior to imposing the fee.

Base Funding Proposals

Mr. Gerber reported that all funding requests were included, but he did not expect them all to be approved. Items that are not funded for FY 2026 will likely be included in the five-year plan.

- VECC Fee Increase: The Board has not decided on an increase, but it will be determined within the next two months. It is estimated to be approximately \$35,000.
- Unified Fire Authority Contract Increase: The typical 5% increase was included at an estimated cost of \$235,000. Fire Chief, Riley Pilgrim, is confident that it will remain at 5%.
- General IT Increases: An estimated \$118,000 is needed related to licensing, equipment repair, and replacement. Increased software licensing fees are approximately two-thirds of the total.
- Elections: Required participation costs to Salt Lake County will be approximately \$45,000. Council Member Hyland noted that they would know the actual cost after their February meeting.
- Equipment Operations: An estimated \$57,350 for increased Public Works Department operations and maintenance costs. It was noted that various equipment, including the sweeper truck and snowplows, is nearing the end of its useful life.
- Liability Insurance: The projected inflationary increase is \$35,000.
- Staff Compensation: Mr. Gerber stated that these costs were estimated using a 2% COLA, but they will rework the figures for the March presentation.

Mr. Jurges stated that the increased personnel costs were projected to be \$521,000. The reduction in transfer to Capital Projects is estimated to be approximately \$800,000. Bond changes, including the Public Works and Police bond payments, resulting in a net increase of \$337,000. Mr. Gerber noted that the next couple of years will be tight.

Funding Consideration Priorities – City Council

Mr. Jurges asked the Council Members to rank their priorities so Staff could understand what is most important to the Council and try to find funding for those projects.

- Bengal Monument: Mayor Weichers suggested that the monument be pushed out another year and reevaluated at the next Budget Retreat. Council Member Newell brought up the possibility of finding an artist seeking name recognition who may be willing to do it for a cost. Mr. Gerber stated that they may be able to obtain funding elsewhere for this and other projects.
- Chris Lane Sidewalk: Council Member Hyland stated that Mr. Shipp presented it to her as a grant-funded project. However, the storm water issue must be resolved prior to working on other projects. Mr. Shipp stated that it is eligible for the Safe Routes to School grant, and he believes the required City match is 20%. Once he obtains more information, he will bring it before the Council for discussion. Council Member Hyland stated that the problem with that sidewalk is which side of the road it goes on. Mayor Weichers indicated that they should begin the grant process.
- Shooting Range: This will be discussed at the federal level in March. The only appropriate City-owned location is the northwest corner of the City Hall complex. Mayor Weichers stated that the County is interested in deeding Fire Station 110 to Cottonwood Heights, and the City is requesting Station 116 as well. There could potentially be space for the range on one of those parcels. Mr. Gerber stated that approximately \$500,000 in improvements would be required for each station.

Chief Russo indicated that they need room for restrooms and classrooms, which is why City Hall is a good location for it. That will be an issue with the Guardian program. The shooting range that they toured cost \$2.2 million, and the grant is for \$1.8 million, so the City's portion would be approximately \$400,000. A smaller range could be built, but fewer people could use it at a time, which would affect potential revenues. Cottonwood Heights currently pays Murray \$500 per day to use their facility, but it will be closed for upgrades.

Council Member Holton stated that there are no matching funds requirements, but a stipulation is that the money cannot be used for construction. The modular ranges qualify because they are prefabricated and only gas and electric need to be connected. To cut costs, they would have the option to include fewer lanes or technology.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Jurges clarified that there is no minimum amount required for sales tax bonds. Mayor Weichers noted that it would be hard to find \$400,000 in the General Fund, but if they knew that the revenue could easily cover bond payments, bonding could be a possibility. Mr. Jurges stated that it would likely not be feasible to take out a bond for less than \$1 million. Council Member Holton noted that the demand is there; five cities have contacted him asking how they were able to obtain the funding. Chief Russo stated that the facility is not just a gun range. It includes a simulator that projects scenarios onto a self-healing curtain for use in different scenarios, including de-escalation training.

Council Member Holton stated that he believes the money must be used within one year. If the House of Representatives does not pass a budget in March, he will go back through the process.

- Sister Cities: Council Member Holton reported that a delegation of 15 representatives from the Sister City will visit Cottonwood Heights over the Fourth of July holiday. Their education foundation also wants to have a five-day student exchange of 25 high school students, so he has been reaching out to the school districts to determine interest. An organization in Korea also wants to send 12 students to Cottonwood Heights to spend time with local Korean War veterans. They have requested that City representatives visit October 17, 2025, through October 19, 2025, for their big festival.

Council Member Holton obtained a donation of \$20,000 from America First Credit Union to the Korean Foundation. The Larry H. Miller Foundation will also be donating to the effort. That might go more toward scholarships, as he would like to send students from Hillcrest or Brighton High School to South Korea. Delta Airlines has agreed to co-host a fundraiser with him to raise funds for that effort.

The Korean Federation and Korean Chamber of Commerce have agreed to do a Korean Festival during the time that the Sister City representatives are in Cottonwood Heights. He believes the City also needs to allocate funds for things like dinner for the delegates or perhaps a trip to Snowbird. When Cottonwood Heights representatives go to South Korea, the Sister City covers their hotel, accommodations, food, etc.

Council Member Newell asked if the University of Utah is willing to cover a portion of the entertainment costs. Council Member Holton stated that President Randall is very excited and will likely want to host a dinner, along with a potential dinner at the Governor's Mansion.

Council Member Birrell recognized the amount of time and effort Council Member Holton has put into the sister cities relationship. However, she noted that when the Council decided to support the Sister Cities relationship, they were told that there would not be an ongoing monetary commitment. Council Member Holton stated that it is a new thing. When they visited Incheon, Yeonsu-gu, officials there stated that they were looking forward to the opportunity to visit Cottonwood Heights. That was a request that Council

Member Holton did not expect. As they build the relationship, he is trying to determine how to be a good Sister City. If Cottonwood Heights hosts a dinner, they need to show the proper hospitality. He personally spent approximately \$9,500 working on the relationship, and he was trying to limit the City's expenses. He did not know if the requested \$20,000 would be ongoing because they may not return next year, and he believes the private sector will donate approximately \$40,000 to the effort.

Council Member Hyland stated that she would like to revisit the matter in March. It is fundamental to make sure that the City is financially sound for the next couple of years.

Council Member Newell stated that they needed to determine what funding can be obtained from other sources and suggested asking the Office of Economic Development to contribute.

Council Member Holton stated that he is trying to obtain funding from multiple sources, but he believes they need to cover things like basic accommodations for the delegation. He is trying to get the rooms donated or at a reduced rate. There will be some expense to the City, but he was comfortable with it not being a recurring expense.

Council Member Birrell stated that Council Member Holton made a very clear point on the economic benefits to both Cottonwood Heights and the State, and she agreed with Council Member Newell that they should try to obtain State funds. Council Member Holton stated that the Office of Economic Development will fund the Asian Festival and potentially the Korean Festival, but they are more geared toward funding gatherings. The Council Members discussed potential donors and the benefits of the sister cities relationship.

- Foundation: Mr. Gerber stated that the research provided by City Attorney, Shane Topham, was not promising as there is not a good way to have a city involved in a foundation and depoliticize that involvement. Council Member Holton described his vision for the foundation to provide a mechanism for people in the community to help one another.

Council Member Birrell stated that Randy Whitehead has the Neighborhood Help 501(c)3, and it could be worth talking with him about expanding the organization into that area. Council Member Holton stated that he would not be comfortable with the City being part of an organization for which they have no oversight. He noted that South Salt Lake City is starting a 501(c)3, and a lot of cities have nonprofit arts councils.

Mr. Gerber stated that the benefit of having the City involved would be that it can keep going longer, but they could not find a way to keep the Council out of it in some form or another. Council Member Holton stated that they could, for example, agree to a dollar amount for the budget, but it would be fully funded through private donations. Mr. Gerber stated that the ongoing \$50,000 cost indicated in the Staff Report was if staff support was required.

Council Member Birrell stated that they needed to consider the burden to Staff of launching a foundation, even if it is donor-driven. She believes there are already organizations that can help people in need, and she wants to make sure they have considered steering them to those organizations. Council Member Newell noted that Utah 211 already provides that service, but this would be a way for the City to show its concern for residents by doing things like using public funds to clean out hoarding houses. The foundation would be able to do that in lieu of the City expending those funds, and it could be administered by volunteers.

Mayor Weichers reported that Ann Eatchell has expressed interest in administering the foundation.

Council Member Holton stated that the concern with having Staff and the Council involved is in regard to private donations. They could create a City-run organization that is highly focused on volunteers and run like a committee. He has spoken with religious leaders in the area who indicated that they sometimes have to return donations due to strict guidelines on what tithing money can be spent on. They feel like there is a large void where people are not getting local help even though their neighbors want to provide it.

In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Mr. Gerber stated that the problem is someone can donate money and state that they would like it to go to the foundation, but the City is not obligated to use it for that purpose. Typically, they do because it is an ethical obligation, but there is no legal requirement. Council Member Hyland stated that she believed the Council wanted to explore the possibility, but they needed more information to make it work before they assign budget dollars to it. Council Member Holton stated that he did not want budget dollars allocated to the foundation. Mr. Gerber clarified that if he wanted the City to be involved, he would need a line item for staff resources. However, he believes the foundation is needed. Council Member Birrell agreed that there is a need, but she believes there is a reason most cities do not set up foundations. She believes they need to defer to Mr. Gerber's expertise and be realistic, and she would need a lot more detailed information before she could support it.

Council Member Holton removed the request and will focus on creating the foundation personally. Council Member Newell stated that he would assist him in that effort.

- Safety Action Plan: Council Member Hyland stated this would be a grant match in response to Council Member Birrell's request for the Council to look at safety in the City. They discussed the fact that they do not currently have a way to identify the highest-risk areas of Cottonwood Heights and prioritize resources. Mr. Shipp has indicated that a \$400,000 grant has already been approved, but the City must match \$100,000 to be able to use those funds to explore beyond 2700 East and Fort Union Boulevard. Mr. Shipp has indicated that \$500,000 is significantly more than is needed for that area. The funds must be used by 2028, so the project could be delayed.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Shipp stated that the funds are for a planning and demonstration grant. It is an 80/20 grant, so \$100,000 would be the maximum required City match.

Council Member Birrell stated that she and Council Member Hyland were not asking for \$100,000 from the General Fund. It is tied to the SS4A planning grant, and Mr. Shipp obtained approval to use the funds citywide. The money is allocated, but Mr. Shipp expressed concern that the funding could be withdrawn if it is not accessed this year. Council Member Birrell stated that moving forward on this project would show the community that the Council is listening and understands where the dangerous areas are and why people are not using alternative transportation in those areas. Council Member Hyland stated that the study will look at every street in the City. Mr. Shipp added that it would be a toolbox to help create a priorities list.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Shipp stated that he would submit a Request for Qualifications (“RFQ”) for the Council’s review in February, but he did not want to send it out for bid without the Council’s commitment to the SS4A grant. They should be cautious of asking private firms to expend thousands of dollars to prepare quotations if they are not ready to move forward with the project. Once he receives the signed agreement from the federal government, he is happy to send it out. Council Member Holton agreed with Mayor Weichers that they need a firmer number prior to committing to the project.

After discussion, the Council agreed that they would be willing to commit \$40,000 for a very detailed plan. Mr. Shipp clarified that the request for qualifications was the first step. Once a firm is selected, they are provided with the detailed Scope of Work and asked for a final price. At that time, he can provide a cap. Council Member Hyland advocated for initiating the project this fiscal year because it will take 12 to 24 months to complete.

- Technology Updates: Council Member Hyland stated that technology updates can improve customer service, productivity, and aid in regulating short-term rentals.

Mayor Weichers expressed an interest in a system similar to what Sandy utilizes where they can text every resident. Council Member Hyland confirmed that they use CivicPlus, which is an emergency management system. Bluffdale uses the same system. Mr. Gerber stated that they will be bringing several different opportunities for the Council’s consideration when they present the budget.

Council Member Birrell asked about software to bring transparency to the Council process like requests for Agenda items. Mr. Gerber stated that they are considering different software to aid in meeting administration. They have spoken with Granicus, but he was unaware that it could track things like Agenda item requests. At Council Member Birrell’s request, he will follow up with Murray City regarding that functionality.

- Retention Ponds: Council Member Hyland removed this item from consideration for the FY 2026 Budget.
- 2300 East Sidewalk: Mr. Shipp stated that a grant application has been submitted. It is a large grant with a small, 6.77% match. They will not know the outcome of the application until March or April, and funds will not be available for two years. The project will likely require funding in 2028.

Funding Consideration Priorities – Staffing

Mr. Gerber noted that he was presenting all departmental requests, but they would review and pare them down prior to the presentation of the draft budget.

- Building Maintenance: This request involves hiring a building maintenance employee and canceling contracts for these services, which should result in a savings of approximately \$45,000. Public Works staff currently takes time out of their daily schedules to perform maintenance at City Hall. Mr. Shipp stated that the Public Works Department is spending approximately 450 Full-Time Equivalent (“FTE”) hours per year assisting with building maintenance, setting up the community room, etc. Approximately 1,700 FTE hours are expended if you include things like mowing the lawn and snow removal.

In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Mr. Gerber stated that it would be a building maintenance or building manager position. Custodial duties are not that extensive at City Hall, but they may need to ask employees to empty their own garbage, for example. The new employee could not perform electric repairs, but they could do patching, painting, toilet repairs, etc. If they did have contractors come in, the employee could also manage them, which would free up Public Works staff time. Council Member Hyland stated it was a no-brainer if it was a wash or savings.

- Fulltime Recorder/Risk Manager: This position request was changed per Mr. Gerber’s earlier announcement. In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Ms. Higgins stated the position went from manager to analyst, and the recorder and risk manager has a higher level of responsibility.
- Treasurer Trainee: Mr. Muir will be retiring in September 2025, and they would like to bring on a trainee to learn his position so that Mr. Jurgens is not left in a bind. Mr. Jurgens noted that the audit would occur soon after Mr. Muir’s retirement. It is a critical role, and ideally, they will need five months to train.
- Permit Tech FTE: This would move Carmen Preece from part-time to full-time.
- Part-time Animal Control Officer: Council Member Holton and Chief Russo requested a part-time officer to cover evening and weekend shifts in Code Enforcement and Animal Control.

- Emergency Manager: Chief Russo stated that the situation in California has emphasized the importance of having someone in this position. Officer Lance Bess has a degree in emergency management, as well as the personality and skillset for the job. The proposal was to upgrade his position to Sergeant. In addition to emergency management responsibilities, he would also supervise the major accident team. Chief Russo believes he is the best-qualified person to take Paul Brenneman’s position. The salary difference is approximately \$25,000, and he would like to promote the employee prior to the end of the current fiscal year. Mayor Weichers noted that it would be crucial for him to oversee spring runoff and understand what the emergency manager does.

Council Member Birrell stated that additional traffic officers were hired to oversee traction control in peak winter hours and monitor traffic in other seasons and asked how moving Officer Bess to emergency management would affect traffic control. Chief Russo stated that Officer Bess will be a supervisor, and his duties will include providing support for traffic control and the major accident team. He is an accident reconstructionist. Emergency management is an important role, but it is not a full-time role. Chief Russo and Council Member Birrell discussed resources to handle traffic backups in winter and the tradeoff of a longer commute versus enhanced safety.

Funding Consideration Priorities – Public Works

Mr. Shipp reviewed the Public Works projects and noted that grants have been secured for them, but matching funds are required.

- Bengal Boulevard / Highland Drive: A \$2.9 million federal grant was received, requiring a City match of \$219,193.
- Bengal Trail: A total of \$1.1 million was received from Salt Lake County, and the City’s estimated cost is approximately \$608,000.
- Highland Drive Trail: This trail is on the east side of Highland Drive from Fort Union Boulevard to Villaire Avenue. A \$1.9 million federal grant was received. The City’s match will be approximately \$142,000, plus approximately \$62,000 for the environmental study.
- Highland Drive Trail Environmental: This is the trail on the west side of Highland Drive from I-215 to Fort Union Boulevard. A State Transportation Alternatives Program (“TAP”) grant was received in the amount of \$130,000, and the City’s match is \$10,000.
- Creek Road Sidewalk: A TAP grant of \$362,000 was received. If the full grant is used, the City’s match will be \$112,000. Staff does not anticipate using all available funds.
- SS4A: As discussed, Mr. Shipp will prepare an RFQ for this project with an anticipated City match of \$40,000.

Mr. Shipp noted that the total cost to the City for all projects would be approximately \$1.1 million. If all projects were initiated in FY 2026, it would require Capital Improvement funds.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Shipp clarified that there are two Bengal projects including a federal project for the intersection of Bengal Boulevard and Highland Drive and a County project for Bengal Trail. The federal project also has a trail component, so they were able to combine two federal projects into one.

It was Mr. Shipp's opinion that these are the most important projects to move forward with. However, if Capital Improvement funds are utilized, reconstruction will be sacrificed. Approximately \$3 million is allotted to reconstruction each year, \$700,000 of which is for surface maintenance like cape seal and chip seal. The City has recently focused on neighborhood reconstruction. If \$1.1 million is used to cover the Bengal projects, either the neighborhood slated for reconstruction this year would have to be pushed into the future, or no surface maintenance could be completed.

Mr. Shipp noted that the Bengal Trail grant funds will likely still be available if the project is pushed out for one year, but it should be designed in the current year. He would follow up with the WFRC to confirm, but he believed funding for other projects would remain available as well.

Council Member Hyland and Mayor Weichers indicated that they were unclear on the reason for the redesign. Mr. Shipp clarified that the intention is to improve the flow of traffic with double left turn lanes for southbound traffic, as well as a safe route for pedestrian traffic through the intersection. The two projects are tied together and include access mitigation, islands, trees, striping, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and a 10-foot multi-use trail on the north side.

It was decided that this project would be brought to a Work Session for further discussion. The Council agreed that Mr. Shipp should move forward with the design agreement at a cost of approximately \$25,000.

Funding Consideration Priorities – Building and Technology

Mr. Gerber reviewed the priorities and stated that these projects would be brought back to the Council in March.

- Building Maintenance: The building maintenance budget has not changed in several years, and an additional \$15,000 was requested to cover increased costs.
- Bollards: Due to recent events, it was recommended that they install bollards around City Hall at a cost to be determined. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Chief Russo stated that they would mostly be on the east and south sides of the plaza. He noted that bollards were in the original plan but were removed due to cost considerations.
- Audio-Visual System: The system throughout City Hall is failing, and the Informational Technology staff are spending a lot of time trying to keep it running. A full upgrade will

cost approximately \$350,000, including upgraded management software. The system includes all the audio, screens, etc., and is tied together; if one piece fails in the workroom, the Council chambers and community room also go down. The plan is to split the systems so that they operate independently.

- Security System Updates: These updates are required by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and must be completed by 2027.
- Permit Software: This request is to upgrade to a more efficient, more transparent system. The current permitting system is antiquated. The new Cityworks program would tie in with the Geographic Information System (“GIS”) and payment systems. The first-year cost would be approximately \$145,000 and the ongoing cost would be \$35,000, which is similar to the yearly cost of the current system.
- Training: This is a total requested increase of \$5,000 for all departments due to the higher costs of travel and training.
- 5G Modems: Police vehicles are currently operating on 4G modems and need to be upgraded at a cost of approximately \$95,000. Staff is evaluating whether they should be upgraded now or with the next lease cycle. In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Chief Russo clarified that the 4G modems are still working properly, but 5G would assist with dead spots. The current lease expires on July 1, 2026.
- License Plate Readers: The cost to add two additional devices is \$9,000.
- FARO Scanner: This is a request for \$16,000 to upgrade the scanner that is used to recreate crime or accident scenes. The upgraded scanner would more accurately recreate distances and objects and can be used with a drone system.
- Short-Term Rental: Council Member Hyland stated that her intention was for the Short-Term Rental License to help cover the yearly cost of this software. Mr. Gerber stated that the cost was approximately \$25,000 when he checked, but the price could have changed. In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Johnson clarified that the first-year application fee, including a Conditional Use Permit and Business License, would cost approximately \$520, with an annual fee of approximately \$470 thereafter.
- FlashVote: Discussions regarding this software are ongoing, and it was scheduled for discussion at the next Work Session. The annual cost would be \$10,000. In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Mr. Gerber stated that the City does not currently have software to conduct scientific surveys. They could use SurveyMonkey, but it is not scientific.

Funding Consideration Priorities – Parks

- Mountview Fields: The cost to replace the turf at the athletic fields would be \$60,000. They plan to do one field at a time so one field is operational.
- Mountview Basketball: The estimated cost is \$19,000.
- Mountview Nature Hillside: The estimated cost to replace mulch on the hillside is \$17,000.
- Mountview Neos: Repair or replacement of the existing electronic interactive game would be approximately \$20,000. Staff recommended replacing it with other equipment because a repair would only be a temporary fix.

In response to a question from Mayor Weichers, Mr. Gerber stated that they could use current grant funds on these items, and they will look into submitting an application.

- Pollinator Garden: Phases 2 and 3 would cost approximately \$65,000. The Council discussed the project cost, contractor, and phasing, and concerns were expressed about approving this expense in a tight budget year.

The Council discussed next steps in the discussion on form-based code. Mayor Weichers requested that the item be discussed in detail in a future Work Session. In response to a concern raised by Council Member Hyland, Mayor Weichers stated that he has requested a meeting with Rocky Mountain Power, and he believes they will remove the transfer station.

Mayor Weichers stated that committees sometimes get frustrated when the Council does not act on their recommendations, and he believes the Historic Committee members are frustrated about the Veterans Memorial. He would like to stay on top of committee recommendations, even if it is just thanking them for their work and communicating that the Council is appreciative of their efforts. Mr. Gerber stated that they have found a way to fund a smaller memorial this year.

Council Member Birrell indicated she will communicate to the PTOS Committee that the Council is appreciative of their interest in advancing the items they requested, but they would like the committee to prioritize those projects. Mr. Gerber suggested that it could be helpful to educate them on the budget and why projects have been put on hold or delayed. It is important to be clear on what the City can support.

Council Member Birrell commended Mr. Gerber and Staff for their goal of creating a five-year plan that sets priorities and anticipates General Fund spending. That plan could be shared with the public and committees to help them understand the challenges the City faces in its efforts to not increase property taxes.

The City Council Retreat adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Cottonwood Heights City Council Retreat held Thursday, January 16, 2025.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____