

**Sunset City Corporation
City Council Minutes
September 18, 2018
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Minutes of a regular meeting held September 18, 2018 at Sunset City Hall, 200 West 1300 North, Sunset, Utah; Mayor Madsen presiding.

REGULAR SESSION

Mayor and Council Present:

D. Howard Madsen	Mayor
Chad Bangerter	Council Member
Ricky Carlson	Council Member
Norm Noyes	Council Member
Nancy Greco Smalling	Council Member
Scott Wiggill	Council Member

City Employees Present:

Linda J. Youngdell	Treasurer/Office Manager
Ken Eborn	Police Chief
Jason Monroe	Public Works Director
Bruce Arbogast	Police Lt.
Brett Jamison	Police Sgt.
Duane Arbogast	Police Officer
Ken Warnshuis	Police Officer
Christina Arbogast	Court Clerk

Excused:

Susan R. Hale	Recorder
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Others Present:

Janet LuJan	Wanema Butcher
Arlo Doyle	Neil Coker
Allyson Jackson	Laura Penman
Dawn Gilbert	Gerald Bolan

The regular session was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Madsen.

Council Member Bangerter gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: Mayor Madsen advised Recorder Hale's husband had passed away and the service will be held tomorrow. He reported he, Council Member Bangerter and Council Member Carlson attended the Utah League of Cities and Towns conference in Salt Lake City last week. They attended some good classes and he met some of the surrounding Mayors. He stated their appreciation to the residents for the opportunity to be there. He asked for comment other than the fire item. He will allow public comment on that during that agenda item.

Michael Love noted the Council passed the resolution allowing for the additions of the radar speed signs to be added to the budget. He asked where the \$12,000 is going to come from. He believes it is a bad idea to open the budget for those signs. He asked how it was advertised.

Treasurer/Office Manager Youngdell answered it was posted on the City's website, on Facebook and on the Utah Public Notice website mandated by State Statute.

- 1. Present information on the Sunset City Fire Department and receive public input in preparation for possible annexation into the North Davis Fire District:** Mayor Madsen stated the information he was going to give them was a start to the process of annexing into the North Davis Fire District (NDFD). This is not a debate about whether the City should or not, about the right or wrong of it or about what happened before. This is starting today and moving forward to provide permanent fire services. No decision will be made tonight. The citizens have had a year with the NDFD providing Sunset with their services and he has not heard any complaints. He asked them to think about what service they had and what they may have in the future.

The trend is moving towards Fire Districts. There was an article in the Standard Examiner in July 2018 about South Ogden, Washington Terrace and Riverdale moving towards forming a District. A follow up article stated it would be expensive, but the service would be better. Washington Terrace now pays nothing and would have to pay its share, but everyone including the Washington Terrace Mayor believes it would provide better service. Roy has called in advisors to evaluate joining a district and Plain City has also been looking into it. Nationally, volunteer departments are going away due to firefighter's wages, the economy and particularly their struggle with staffing. With the new standards and training, it is hard for a volunteer, who is not paid much, to put into the 200-300 hours necessary to become certified. In August there was another news article about Unified Fire Districts about the improved service.

If a City has its own fire department, 100% of the cost is funded by the residents of the City. Everyone knows Sunset needed a new fire station and equipment. All that and the maintenance of those things are paid by the residents in taxes. The cities in a District shares the cost of the fire station and equipment and that makes it less per household.

With a slide presentation, Mayor Madsen showed everyone how the cost projections were obtained. To have a certified fire department, it has to have Officers on every shift. Sunset City would need a Chief, 3 full-time Captains, 9 full-time firefighters and 10 part-time firefighters. Then there is the uniform allowance, professional services, office supplies, equipment & vehicle maintenance, memberships, training and miscellaneous services. It all adds up to an annual budget of \$1,195,211.47. That is estimating on the low side for the Fire Officers. The fire station cost estimate came from a simple 2-bay station in the Salt Lake area. The fire station, with all the items needed to furnish it would cost \$2,305,500. One in Salt Lake was just built for \$3.5 million and one in Bluffdale for \$4.5 million. The fire engine, with its needed equipment would cost \$694,600. The last one purchased in this district was \$700,000 for the engine alone. At the time he was working on this there were two calls to Sunset and the NDFD had two ambulances, one engine and six firefighters in Sunset. He believes Sunset would need two ambulances for that type of situation and if one breaks down. The cost of two equipped ambulances is \$475,000. It is estimated that an ambulance brings in revenue of about \$80,000. Right now NDFD has more than \$1 million

in uncollected ambulance fees. Sunset is still receiving ambulance payments from over a year ago. Total capital expenses would be \$3,475,600. Some have said Sunset could go back to a volunteer fire department, but he believes that is not an option because staffing is such a problem and the department would still need all the equipment and the building. In regards to the old equipment Sunset had, the working equipment was donated to Davis Technical to use for the instruction of their students.

Currently Sunset pays NDFD \$190,095 to provide fire and ambulance services and that includes a fast attach engine, a regular engine and a ladder truck. The cost for that service, on average is \$111.82 per home. If the City were to be annexed into NDFD Sunset would subtract that amount from its portion of the property tax and NDFD would add the same amount. Just like Sunset, costs will go up for NDFD and they could increase their tax, but for right now this is the amount it is costing the residents. Taking into account the \$80,000 ambulance revenue and the \$111.82 the residents are already paying, there would be an increase of \$544.19 per residence. Added to that, bonding for the fire station, fire engine and ambulances would add another \$141.76 per residence for a total increase of \$685.95 per year.

He told of Syracuse building a fire station in approximately 2008 for \$5,954,000. The payments for that was over \$500,000 before they refinanced it to include a new City building. Over a 20 year period, they will pay \$3,009,737.73 in interest for a total of \$8,963,737.73. Bluffdale just built a station for over \$4 million. He does not believe that any of the Council Members or City staff are in favor of raising the residents' taxes to do this. He ran for Mayor because he wanted to have a City Fire Department. Two weeks after entering the race, he saw the actual figures and changed his mind. He is a strong advocate of annexing into the NDFD. He and Council Member Wiggill are on the NDFD Board, but they cannot vote because Sunset has not annexed into the District. The advantages of annexing into the NDFD is they can then vote on decisions, the residents would save about \$685 per year in taxes and any repair costs and such would be shared between the three cities. The City receives services from certified personnel, which it did with its own fire department, but with the turnover, the experience was lacking. With the NDFD Sunset is also served with updated equipment.

Council Member Wiggill recognized a prior Sunset Fire Chief and believes he would agree with him that the budget meetings are very tough. Since he has been a Council Member, they worked hard to keep the fire budget the same every year. The firefighters had to work long shifts and there was a large turnover in staffing. All the Chiefs he has worked with have approached him about the department going part-time or trying other ways to get the firefighters more pay because it was getting harder and harder to staff the department. When everything started to go down he was very adamant and very selfish about the department. He wouldn't listen to the numbers or anything. He does not believe anyone will find any discrepancies in the documents provided tonight. The building he and the Chief had talked about building was \$1.6 million. The costs in the documents presented tonight are lower than what they had talked about for an ambulance, a fire truck and equipment. Everything kept adding up and they didn't have the budget for it. He has a lot of respect for those who worked for the Sunset Fire Department because they did without a lot of things. He looks at

what the City has today, after reviewing all the material and after seeing the budgets for the two departments he now knows the best service for Sunset, in both cost and professionalism, is NDFD. The fire department was going to have to go without some items they need and that's not fair to them. The residents of Sunset deserve the best equipment and service. Anyone can request a history of response times and they will see Sunset is not any more unsafe than it was a year ago and its being served by a quality service for less money.

Mayor Madsen opened the time for public questions/comments, stating anyone can take one minute to ask their question and the Council will get two minutes to answer their question or if they have a comment they could speak for three minutes. He asked that only residents speak.

Neil Coker said he believes the \$1.2 million budget is quite a bit high for a city of Sunset's size. He gave examples of larger cities' budgets: Syracuse - \$2 million budget, Kaysville - \$950,000, Clinton - fire-\$1.2 million & ambulance-little over \$400,000. He also believes the \$80,000 ambulance revenue is really low because the first year Sunset had the ambulance it was \$120,000. They also need to see the ambulance revenue from Clinton because he believes Clinton comes into Sunset as often as NDFD does. As far as complaints, there was a fire on the train tracks just down from him. The people who called kept track of the time and said it was 10 minutes before a fire department arrived and it was Clinton Fire Department. He and some other people got together to figure up how much it would cost to bring back Sunset Fire and it was a whole lot less. Mayor Madsen replied when he saw the number, it surprised him until he looked at what it was paying for. If he's not mistaken, the 2017 budget for the fire department was \$809,000. Mr. Coker believes all the other surrounding fire departments do not staff with full time people.

Arlo Doyle appreciated the effort that went into creating the documents presented. He killed his political ambition in Sunset by researching inconvenient facts. When he did the calculations based on the property assessment of his home, it was about \$400 additional a year to create a new fire department. Going with NDFD, it was an increase of about \$250-\$300 per year based on the NDFD tax rate. Something, people are not taking into account is the State of Utah allows for certain abatements on a person's property tax. Anyone who is a Veteran of the Armed Forces who has a disability of 30% or more has an abatement on their taxes that affects any kind of property tax. He currently has the maximum amount allowed which means up to \$250,000 of his property is not taxed, so he doesn't pay any property tax in Sunset. There are about 250 households in Sunset that have Veterans in them. He guesses that about 200 of those households have abatements. These and other abatements cause those who have no abatements to shoulder more of the tax burden. He believes the tax burden would be unbearable if the fire department is brought back. When he ran for Council, he was all for keeping the fire department as long as it was feasible. With the figures presented and those he found doing research, he believes it is not feasible. The advantage of belonging to a District is cost sharing. Larger cities have larger tax bases and will pay a larger portion of the District's costs. This is probably the best and cheapest option for Sunset, while providing the most professional individuals.

Allyson Jackson asked if the citizens will be able to vote on the annexation or if it will be strictly the Council's decision. Mayor Madsen explained he is trying to get out all the information and he would like to get all the public input he can. He stated the Council has the ability to make the decision. When topics like this are to be discussed, Mrs. Jackson suggested putting up A-frame type signs around the City so more people will know about them. She believes there would have been more here if it was advertised more. When told notice was put on the utility bills, she said she never reads the messages on her utility bills because they're so tiny and she doesn't think about reading them. It was also announced during the last Council meeting. Mayor Madsen believed they did all they could, but will take her suggestion under advisement. Mrs. Jackson said if people don't see signs they don't go looking for the information. Mayor Madsen said it is important for the Council to let everyone know, but it is also important for the citizens to keep track of what the City is doing by checking the notices on the public website. As far as how things went last year, nothing was done illegal. It may have been done different, but nothing was illegal. He is trying to go a little further and present the facts before going forward.

Laura Penman thanked the Mayor and Council for doing all the research. Since the election, she has not been voicing opinions. One of the things she ran on was more means of connecting with the residents. She noted the Utah Public Notice Website will email you the information and put it on your calendar if you sign up for it. She asked about adding a text or email list for another form of communication. She saw that Clinton is doing this. Mayor Madsen said they could look at it. He asked her what her feeling is about the fire department. Mrs. Penman responded she said at the "meet the candidates night" she told everyone she would love to have a fire station in the City, but only if it is financially feasible. At this time she is for NDFD and was even before the election because she had also done her research.

Arlo Doyle said he recently heard the City was paying the \$190,000 quarterly. Mayor Madsen clarified it is per year. He knows people who started this rumor would probably troll this audio, so he wanted it addressed.

Council Member Smalling said she also ran with the mindset of having a fire department within the City. She also said she wanted to have a fire department in Sunset, but didn't know what it would look like. Now seeing the numbers and service, she as a citizen would agree NDFD is the way to go and as a Council Member, she know it is best for the City.

Mayor Madsen asked those in attendance to spread the word about the information handed out tonight and tell people it is on the City Office counter if they would like a copy.

Neil Coker asked if they had considered having an independent panel to figure up the actual cost. Mayor Madsen stated the costs given were basic and generic. To have an independent person do this they would have to know exactly what they wanted, such as more bays, a ladder truck, etc. He did not just get information from NDFD, but other professionals such as suppliers, stations and cities to use their actual figures.

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Council Member Wiggill reminded everyone that October 3rd is the NDFD open house in Sunset from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. He invited everyone to come to the City Building to meet them. They are also holding two others; one on October 8th at Station 42 in Clearfield and one on October 10th at the West Point City Building.

Mayor Madsen announced the City is holding a mini Fall Festival to light the fireworks that they were unable to light during Fun Days. It will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday September 29th at Central Park. There will be a couple of food booths and some bounce houses. The Youth City Council will be doing games and selling pumpkins for a fund raiser. There will be music and fireworks at 8:30 p.m.

Council Member Wiggill made a motion to adjourn. Council Member Bangerter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Council Members Bangerter, Carlson, Noyes, Smalling and Wiggill voting yes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Approved – October 2, 2018

/s/D. Howard Madsen, Mayor

/s/Susan R. Hale, Recorder