

SOUTH JORDAN CITY
CITY COUNCIL STUDY MEETING

April 2, 2024

Present: Mayor Dawn R. Ramsey, Council Member Patrick Harris, Council Member Kathie Johnson, Council Member Tamara Zander, City Manager Dustin Lewis, Assistant City Manager Jason Rasmussen, City Attorney Ryan Loose, Director of Commerce Brian Preece, Director of Strategy & Budget Don Tingey, IT Director Jon Day, Director of Public Works Raymond Garrison, CFO Sunil Naidu, City Engineer Brad Klavano, Director of Administrative Services Melinda Seager, Director of Planning Steven Schaefermeyer, Police Chief Jeff Carr, Police Sergeant Steve Azevedo, Deputy Fire Chief Ryan Lessner, Communications Manager Rachael Van Cleave, Recreation Director Janell Payne, Senior Systems Administrator Phill Brown, GIS Coordinator Matt Jarman, City Recorder Anna Crookston, Meeting Transcriptionist Diana Baun, Business Licensing Executive Assistant Ambra Holland, Associate Director of Strategy & Budget Katie Olson, Water Conservation Coordinator Connor Oswald

Absent: Council Member Don Shelton, Council Member Jason McGuire

Others: Jay Francis

4:39 P.M.
STUDY MEETING

A. Welcome, Roll Call, and Introduction: *By Mayor, Dawn R. Ramsey*

Mayor Ramsey welcomed everyone present and introduced an informal start to the meeting, as only Council Members Harris and Johnson were present. The Invocation, Mayor and Council Coordination, and Discussion of the Regular Council Meeting were skipped and South Valley Chamber CEO, Jay Francis was invited to begin his presentation.

B. Invocation: *By Council Member, Tamara Zander*

Council Member Zander offered the invocation after the South Valley Chamber update.

C. Mayor and Council Coordination - None

D. Discussion/Review of Regular Council Meeting

Presentation Items:

- Trans-Jordan Landfill
- Arbor Day 2024 Proclamation

Action Items:

- Resolution R2024-22, Firework regulations
- Resolution R2024-26, FY24-25 Tentative Budget
- Resolution RDA2024-01, FY24-25 Tentative Budget

Mayor Ramsey noted that an email was forwarded to all the council members with questions on the tentative budget from Council Member Shelton and the responses from CFO Naidu (Attachment B).

Public Hearing Items:

- Resolution R2024-19, 2024 CDBG AAP
- Ordinance 2024-08, Business License Text Amendment

E. Presentation Item

E.1. South Valley Chamber Update. *(By CEO, Jay Francis)*

Jay Francis reviewed his prepared presentation on the South Valley Chamber's 2023 Year in Review (Attachment A).

Council Member Tamara Zander joined the meeting.

Mayor Ramsey recognized the official opening of the City Council Study Session, noting there was now a quorum present and introducing them. She excused Council Members McGuire and Shelton, who were unable to attend tonight.

Council Members and staff thanked Mr. Francis for all he and the Chamber have done for the community.

The meeting then moved back to Item B, with the Invocation, and moved forward in order from that point.

F. Discussion Items

F.1. Homeless update. *(By Chief of Police, Jeff Carr and Sergeant Steve Azevedo)*

Sergeant Azevedo reviewed his prepared presentation on transient activity in the city (Attachment C) and shared drone photos taken of four specific homeless camps throughout the city (Attachments D, E, F and G). He noted that Salt Lake City is admittedly pushing transients to the south to additional cities to help clean up their area. It was also noted that being end of the Red Line unfortunately also contributes to the additional rise in transient activity here.

Chief Carr added that it is a complex problem, as it is not illegal to be homeless or walk the streets of the city. Our city does have restrictions already in place regarding camping on public property, but when it's on private property it then requires the trespassers to be issued violations before being forced out.

Attorney Loose added that state law may be changing on the camping and homeless laws as well, due to a recent case challenging the current restrictions. You can't block travel areas, sidewalks,

etc.; however, in other states, people have been able to inhabit park strips and other “public areas” noting that they are not blocking travel on the traditional routes.

Sergeant Azevedo continued discussing how other big cities in the country are dealing with these issues, having allowed the camping and drugs previously and now trying to reign it back in. He continued reviewing his prepared presentation (Attachment C) and discussed their current progress as well as their goals for police department response.

Council Member Johnson asked about a correlation between the higher rates of panhandling in the city and transients.

Sergeant Azevedo responded it is not illegal to panhandle on public sidewalks, but when done in a private lot they can be trespassed. However, they usually already know the rules and will just move out to the public areas when they see police in the area.

Council Member Zander asked if any other cities are addressing this problem with a similar position in their police departments, or if we have any information on what they are doing specifically to address the homeless issues in their cities.

Sergeant Azevedo responded that only South Salt Lake has a devoted team of officers, with some other cities having a similar situation to ours where patrol officers are also assigned to help when needed, and some have nothing at all.

Mayor Ramsey shared her concerns with residents hearing this information and thinking that this is the start of something much larger, even though, based on the presentation tonight, it is still a small and controlled issue in our city. She asked if Sergeant Azevedo if had any reassurance to share with residents who might have concerns.

Sergeant Azevedo responded that we have a relatively small homeless population compared to surrounding cities, and his officers enforce the laws and take people to jail when appropriate, as well as clearly monitoring those who need to keep moving so they are aware it will not be tolerated. Our officers do a great job being seen and visiting the known areas. Some of the local transients know him by name and will ask for him when contacted. There has not been a rise in crime in the areas where these camps are located, which is very reassuring.

Chief Carr also noted that countywide, the homeless population numbers are 6000 to 10,000, but here, with our department’s proactivity, we still have very small numbers.

Sergeant Azevedo noted that it is almost unavoidable to have some transient activity within the city, but the continued enforcement and outreach has helped keep the crime down and made the transient population aware they are being watched. Anyone contacted has their picture on file with the department, so if they commit a crime in the future and it’s on video they will be identified quickly. The homeless in the area are more worried about losing their stuff, their camp and tent, so they try to avoid having the police remove them. In that instance, the department has

done a great job in working to keep the crime down and the reason why there were no slides included in the presentation to indicate theft or burglary crimes were on the rise.

Mayor Ramsey added that other counties outside of Salt Lake are having to figure this out as well. Washington and Davis Counties are now seeing the effects of this here and legislation is being discussed to require all cities within a county to contribute to resources, as is done in Salt Lake County, instead of putting it all on one city, like Ogden. She thanked Sergeant Azevedo and his team for the respect they are showing to those they interact with, as everyone deserves that.

Sergeant Azevedo reiterated that he wants citizens to know this isn't a crisis here in South Jordan like it can be in other areas of the county, because our police department is keeping on top of it. It is important for residents to know that while it can be hidden, these camps are there, but everyone should feel comfortable calling 911 or the nonemergency line knowing the police department will come out and make contact, doing what they can to either provide services, rides, or whatever else might be needed.

Council Member Zander shared that her takeaway from this discussion has been "enforcement balanced by compassion," and she very much appreciated that approach.

Sergeant Azevedo agreed, adding that is how he has labeled this as well. It is not just compassion for those experiencing homelessness, but compassion for our citizens as well who expect a certain level of cleanliness and safety in their city.

F.2. Water Conservation. *(By Director of Public Works, Raymond Garrison)*

Director Garrison gave a brief overview of the city's programs and the programs offered by the Jordan Valley Water Conservation District (JVWCD) that we have chosen not to take advantage of yet since our programs have been successful on their own and much more efficient with superior customer service. Every time they meet with JVWCD to go over annual plans for city programs they are asked to join their Water Savers Program, and every year South Jordan declines the invitation for the reasons above.

Conservation Coordinator Connor Oswald reviewed the prepared presentation regarding water conservation and comparing the City's current programs to the Jordan Valley Water Conservation District's Water Savers Program (Attachment H).

Director Garrison shared that because we are not a part of Utah Water Savers now, we don't qualify for the \$3.00 per square foot of removal and only get \$1.00 per square foot. The State funded some of that a few years back during the extreme drought conditions, and staff has met with them multiple times since then sharing concerns that we should be eligible for that higher amount; however, it was written in the funding rules that enrollment in Utah Water Savers was required. They have allowed the city to continue getting funding for larger projects over the past few years. He discussed the options on the table this year for the Council to consider, with Option 1 being they continue working with JVWCD on the larger projects using the money

given to them outside of the Water Savers program, and continue the city's current program which has been very successful. Option 2 involves joining the Utah Water Savers which would bring more money into the city and allowing the \$3 per square foot rebate, along with the additional \$68,000 that could be used for another program. A concern with Option 2 is a decline in participation in the city's established program, which has been very successful. They also don't know if they would be able to go back to Option 1 later down the road if they were unsatisfied with Option 2.

Council Member Johnson asked what specific concerns staff had with choosing Option 2 for the residents.

Director Garrison responded that there used to be requirements to attend a class before additionally having to submit detailed project plans for review and approval through Water Savers, however they recently shared with him that is now a 5 minute video on efficient watering, but still requires a design plan to be submitted and approved. Most residents did not want to go through the lengthy and complicated process Water Savers requires for assistance.

Mayor Ramsey shared conversations meetings with the water board, and how they would ask why South Jordan's allotment was always separately voted on. The response from the board had always been that South Jordan did what was originally planned 15-17 years ago, creating their own program, and no other city ever moved forward with their own individual plans. She thinks that South Jordan not getting the full \$3 per square foot as every other city, simply because we created our own program that achieves the same results as the Water Savers program, is not right. She suggested a change legislatively, so that those who are achieving the same conservation results with their own programs can get the same \$3 per square foot rebate. If joining Water Savers will give our residents a lower service level than what our program has offered she doesn't think that's right. She appreciates what they are doing with the Water Savers program, providing a platform for other communities to have a water conservation program, but it's not filling a need here because South Jordan has been doing it independently longer than anyone else. She also noted that members of the water district are sharing a narrative with residents who contact them that the city needs to get on board with Utah Water Savers, that we are the only ones not doing it, as if the city is doing nothing for water conservation. That narrative is unfair and misleading, along with being inaccurate since they are making residents feel that they are missing out on services because of the lack of membership, but leaving out that the city has their own robust program that actually has more options.

Coordinator Oswald shared that if they were to abandon the city's program and switch to Utah Water Savers, not only would residents lose the ease of application and quick customer service aspect, but they would also lose the ability to have staff come out to their homes and interact with them directly. Those services are invaluable.

Director Garrison expressed the above concerns during his last meeting with JVWCD, emphasizing our city's displeasure with not being given the full \$3 per square foot, despite having a program that's more efficient than the Water Savers program.

The Council and Staff had a brief discussion about moving forward with getting things changed legislatively or administratively, whichever was appropriate. The water conservation district is only supposed to be the pass through for the cities to claim their already appropriated funds. Despite showing that we are a large enough city and doing more park strip flips than many other cities combined, the water conservancy district still refuses to disperse the full funds the city would receive if they were enrolled in the Water Savers program. Staff has done some research and Legal is working on options for going about getting things changed so we can get all the funds earned. Council and Staff agree that the original intention of the funding was not to force those already running successful conservation programs to abandon their high service levels and customer satisfaction just to join their plan being offered for those who had nothing in place, and that they should move forward with attempts to get the full \$3 per square foot rebate without sacrificing the current programming.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Johnson motioned to adjourn the April 2, 2024 City Council Study Meeting. Council Member Zander seconded the motion; vote was 3-0 unanimous in favor. Council Members Shelton and McGuire were absent from the vote.

The April 2, 2024 City Council Study meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.