

# Providence City Newsletter

## Upcoming Events

### City Council

2nd & 4th Tuesdays except July,  
November and December

Tuesday, February 12 & 26 @ 6:00PM

### Planning Commission

2nd & 4th Wednesdays except July,  
November and December

Wednesday, February 13 & 27 @  
6:00PM

### Justice Court

From 4:00PM - 6:00PM

Every Monday, except holidays

### Mayor's Town Hall,

Held the first Saturday of the  
month depending on issue and  
level of citizen interest

## Contact Information

Providence City Offices  
164 North Gateway Drive  
(435) 752-9441

### \*\* After-Hours Emergencies \*\*

Fire or police emergencies - 911  
Animal control 435-753-7555  
City related issues 752-9441; after  
hours message will have an on-call  
number to call a city employee who  
will respond.

### Direct line to the Mayor

(435) 760-8989 cell  
[johnnd@providence.utah.gov](mailto:johnnd@providence.utah.gov)

## The Mayor's Memo

Yesterday I had to drive down to the Salt Lake airport to pick up a family friend. The trip took me 3 ½ hours. Sardine Canyon was a white-out and a safe speed was 25 miles per hour. I witnessed several spin-outs and 2-wheel drive vehicles inching their way along, slowing the rest of the traffic. The snow plows were on the northbound side in a flying wing; 3 plows staggered to cover the whole road all at once.

After getting to Brigham City, and on to I-15, I found out that the interstate was completely shut down at Willard and traffic was being directed off. There were several jack knifed trucks and more passenger cars involved than I could count. There were at least 15 emergency vehicles on the scene and another half dozen managing traffic.

There were 6 or more agencies represented on the scene: UHP, Brigham City PD, Brigham City and Willard City Fire, Willard City PD, UDOT, Box Elder Sheriff, and I counted eight big tow trucks pass on the shoulder to get to the accident.

On the return trip, there was no evidence of the accident and southbound traffic was flowing at full speed.

*Why mention this?*

All of the agencies I mentioned are what we call

first responders. We go about much of our daily life seamlessly and unaware that our streets and highways are kept free-flowing and safe due to the dedication and hard work of these people. I was surprised to find out that there was not even a national day of appreciation for first responders until as recently as October 2017.

One of the biggest challenges families of first responders face is finding adequate and affordable housing. I do know Logan City has tried to recruit paramedics and other emergency personnel and several times and come up with zero. Our sheriff and police agencies in the valley have lost valuable talent to other jurisdictions.

Fewer and fewer people are interested in fields such as police and fire services as well as local government careers. This includes school teachers and local school administration. Having been priced out of the housing market, they see little future in pursuing a career as a First Responder. I think they would make great neighbors.

—John Drew, Providence City Mayor



## State Legislature Considers Levying Sales Tax on Services

Utah governor Gary Herbert in several public addresses last week touted a plan for a significant cut in sales taxes. Herbert said that combining that tax cut with new taxes on services could drop the sales tax rate 64 percent, "to a mere 1.75 percent" and means nine out of 10 taxpayers would pay less in taxes than they do today. (He is referring to the state rate level and this does not reflect local sales taxes.)

What services? No one knows what might work yet. The legislators are looking to state analysts for guidance on what services revenues in the State could be taxed.

Health care? Ridesharing services? Real estate transactions? Your tax accountant? Your plumber? Adding services would expand the tax base. A classic example is the music CD you bought for your kids at the local store 10 years ago was taxed, but most music today is downloaded or listened to on line.

The governor has correctly pointed out that the dollars spent on items subject to sales tax has shrunk, with the result being diminishing state and local tax revenues. That may not be a bad thing. When government revenue sources diminish, it forces state and local officials to find efficiencies in government operations. It forces a reexamination of priorities, and alternatives to solving problems. In my opinion, to do their job.

It means elected officials need to ensure that essential services are adequately funded first before contemplating the "nice to have" projects. It means studying alternatives to accomplishing our core mission. It means doing our homework.

This reminds me of an old saying I will have to paraphrase. It is something like, "There is no end to doing good when you're doing it with other people's money." So politicians like to make sure there is plenty of it.

—John Drew, Mayor

## Public Works Department



### **Cardboard Recycling**

The use of the cardboard dumpster located at the Public Works facility is for use by all citizens; however if the dumpster is full please do not place cardboard on the ground. The dumpster is emptied on almost a daily basis, 3 to 4 times a week. We would ask that if the dumpster is full that you please come back after the dumpster has been emptied rather than leaving your cardboard on the ground.

### **Trash Dumpsters**

The garbage dumpsters located at any City facility are not for public use. Please do not use any of these dumpsters for your personal garbage. If you have garbage that is too large for your personal container, the Logan City landfill is open Monday – Saturday. If you need an additional pickup please contact the Logan City Environmental Department at 435-716-9755.

### **Removal of Snow on Sidewalks and Driveways**

Thank you for your efforts in keeping sidewalks clear of snow and not placing snow from your driveways in the streets. This helps improve the safety for all citizens. Sidewalks should be cleared within a reasonable time after a snowstorm. See Providence City Code **7-1-2**: Removal of Snow

### ***The snow season is here. Winter parking hours are in effect.***

- Winter parking hours go into effect 24 hours after the first snowstorm that requires the City to plow the streets in November, or December 1, whichever is earlier.
- Vehicles or equipment cannot be parked in the City right-of-way from 12:00 AM (midnight) to 6:00 AM. If there is no curb, vehicles or equipment must be a minimum of eight-feet (8') from the asphalt.
- The City will not be liable for any damage occurring to any vehicle or equipment parked on any street or right-of-way during street and right-of-way maintenance.
- For the complete ordinance, see Providence City Code **6-2-8:A** Winter Regulations: Night Parking.

—Rob Stapley, Public Works Director

## City Office Administration

### **Business License and Dog License Renewal**

- 2019 business license renewals were due January 1. Late fees apply February 1.
  - ★ Home business: \$25 license fee, \$12.50 late fee, total due \$37.50.
  - ★ Commercial business: \$50 license fee, \$25 late fee, total due \$75.
- All 2018 dog licenses in Providence City expired on December 31. Late fees apply on February 1.
  - ★ Spayed/neutered: \$15 license fee, \$10 late fee, total due \$25
  - ★ Unaltered: \$25 license fee, \$10 late fee, total due \$35.

Along with your renewal, please provide a proof of rabies vaccination.

### **Holiday Decorations at the Cemetery**

Please remove any holiday decorations (other than Valentines decorations) that you have placed at the cemetery. Please keep in mind that holiday decorations should be removed within seven (7) days after the holiday. Thank you in advance for your help.

### **Youth Baseball and Softball**

Registration for youth baseball and softball begins February 4 and runs through April 26. Register online at [providence.sportsiteslabs.com/player](http://providence.sportsiteslabs.com/player) or at the Providence City Office, 164 North Gateway Drive (Mon-Fri 8:00 am— 5:00 pm). Please contact us if you have any questions at 435-752-9441.

### **Scorekeepers and Umpires Wanted**

Providence City is now accepting applications for umpires and scorekeepers. Applications are available on our website, <http://www.providencecity.com/jobs-available.htm>.

— Skarlet Bankhead, Office Services Administrator



# Budget Choices, Challenges

With the beginning of the calendar year, we start having discussions about the budget for the following fiscal year. State Code requires municipal governments prepare an annual budget, and has very specific requirements; see Title 10, Chapter 6 of the State Code.

Municipal governments follow a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year. We start our budget process at the top level, first discussing city priorities, program objectives and budget alternatives. Our first council budget workshop was on Monday, February 4.

My initial message to the council is to discuss our city's primary responsibilities and functions, then priorities. Once we have agreed on our FOCUS, then we discuss program operations; what services we provide to our residents. We discuss program costs and effectiveness.

## *What are the City's spending priorities?*

In the August 2018 newsletter, I stated that public safety was Job #1; Police, fire, EMS, crossing guards, roads kept clear of snow and ice, traffic control, road striping.

What comes next? Safe and well-maintained roads. An adequate and well-maintained culinary water system. A leak-free, well maintained sewage conveyance system. A stormwater system that minimizes property damage from runoff. What else?

## *What programs does Providence City provide?*

Police and emergency services, safe culinary water delivery, sanitary sewage system collection and treatment, stormwater mitigation and testing, streets maintenance, repair and replacement, justice court, park maintenance and upkeep, recreation programs, solid waste collection, cemetery operation and upkeep, planning and development.

## *A city's got to know its limitations*

Without raising fees or taxes, we are mostly limited to budgeting for much the same as last year. Or are we? Do we have cash on hand for extra projects? There is a two-part answer to that question. It depends.

In our general fund we have unrestricted available cash of \$1.7 million as of December 31. How much is prudent? The measure I use is months supply on hand. With a \$3.5 million general fund budget, that is about a 6 months supply. What should we have on hand to weather a downturn in the economy? Would it be prudent to have a year's supply?

The other answer is that we have funds set aside in our Capital Projects Fund for roads replacement projects. See below.

## *Are any large, extraordinary, unusual, critical expenditures anticipated for fiscal year 2020?*

We are committed to an additional \$400,000 recurring cost each year for the emergency services contract with Logan City (General Fund) over and above previous years. Where do those extra funds come from? The council will be weighing a fee for emergency services on utility bills.

The city's share of the Spring Creek east and west crossings will cost \$75,000 each (Capital Projects Fund). The cost of road replacement projects are anticipated to cost \$700,000 (Capital Projects Fund). We are obligated to pay a developer something north of \$400,000 (see article on page 4).

Here is another possible expense/opportunity depending how you look at it. You may have heard that Volkswagen reached a settlement with the State of Utah as did other states over a scandal involving emissions testing of diesel vehicles. There is \$35 million available to replace government vehicles. Great, right? The catch is that we have to come up with half the purchase price. Our public works department submitted an application for

approximately \$890,000 worth of vehicles. Can we find a spare \$445,000 (General Fund)?

## *Fund Reserves, Restricted Funds*

In the General Fund and Enterprise funds, monies are in reserve, or use is restricted. For example there are general fund restricted monies for perpetual care in our cemetery (\$293,000), park impact fees (\$77,000), library (\$8,000), B&C road funds (\$428,000). In the Capital Projects Fund we have in reserves \$687,000 for roads and \$51,000 for parks.

Enterprise funds account for operations where the intent is that the costs (expenses, including depreciation) of providing services be financed or recovered through user charges. Enterprise funds also accumulate fund reserves (cash) for the purpose of covering the cost of eventual replacement of infrastructure. The reserves are collected when user fees include depreciation, an allocation of capital costs spread over the expected life of the asset.

## *Does our city operate enterprise funds to make a profit?*

Some cities in Utah do, including some here in Cache Valley. It's easier to vote in a fee increase in an enterprise fund than for the council to have to explain a tax increase. Then the excess is transferred to the general fund. We do not. If anything, our enterprise fund reserves are likely under funded.

## *Are our enterprise fund reserves adequate to cover replacement costs?*

The only way to know is to have a reserve/rate study done by an outside firm that evaluates an inventory of all enterprise fund assets and compares the accumulated reserves to anticipated replacement costs. An example would be a pipe with a 50 year life having 10 years remaining life; what would be the replacement cost at the end of 10 years? Depreciation involves taking the expected life of, say, a culinary water line which is divided in to the original (historic) cost. The historic cost which is the basis for depreciation is likely a fraction of the future replacement cost.

## *Streets 5-year plan*

By State code, we set aside reserves for water and sewer in separate *enterprise funds*, but not streets. Streets are accounted for in the general fund along with all other city operations. Some general fund monies are also restricted/reserved. What is left for streets?

We are on a pay-as-you-go basis, but it is the city's single largest asset, more than all others combined. Having a long term plan for streets is a prudent policy.

## *What is the status of our budget 6 months in to the current fiscal year?*

Sales tax and other revenues slightly up < > Overall expenses down

Having been through the budget process as mayor last year, I can tell you that our City staff pay scale is below that of the average municipal employee in Cache Valley. I will say overall we have a hard working, dedicated group of employees serving the residents of Providence.

There is never a shortage of projects people would like the city to spend money on, way beyond our means. My point is, the city doesn't have any money, it's taxpayer money.

If you'd like further explanation about the budget process or how city finances work, give me a call or drop me an email.

—John Drew, Mayor

## The American Red Cross has issued an **Emergency Need** for blood and platelet donations

Severe winter weather across the U.S. coupled with an influenza outbreak impacting 36 states, has caused the American Red Cross to reissue their emergency plea for blood and platelet donations. During the month of January, snow, ice and cold temperatures have caused the Red Cross to collect more than 14,000 fewer donations, resulting in Red Cross blood donations being distributed to hospitals faster than they are coming in.

With more cold weather and heavy snow predicted across the U.S., it is important that eligible individuals in areas unaffected by the weather make an appointment to give blood or platelets now. Patients in need of lifesaving blood products can't wait until the weather improves this winter.

All eligible donors, especially platelet and blood donors with type O blood, are urgently needed to help restock the shelves for hospital patients. Donation appointments can be easily scheduled by using the free Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

I find four upcoming blood drives in the month of February in Cache Valley. You can view the locations listed on the [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) website by entering your zip code.

—John Drew, Mayor

## Contract with Developer from 2005 Obligates Providence City to Purchase Water Rights

In January of 2005, the City entered in to a contract with Providence Highlands, LC in which the developer would convey to the city water rights for a 135 acre development in the southeast part of the city that we call the Highlands. The contract obligated the developer to deliver 457 acre feet of water which would be held in trust by the city. The amount of water was estimated to be sufficient for approximately 500 homes. The contract stated that in the event that all of the water rights were not used after a period of 15 years, the city would have to purchase the remaining shares.

After 14 years, about 100 of the water rights have been used in the development (about an equal number of lots have been sold). The City is obligated to purchase the remaining unused rights at a price of \$1350 per right at the end of the contract. The contract 15 year term is up in January 2020. With the number of rights unused as of today, that totals about \$480,000.

Why did the city commit to this? Why were those homes never built? What should have happened?

The city at the time should have made corresponding plans to align this commitment for water with adequate zoning to accommodate and use all of the water rights committed to be used. In other words, the property in question should have been zoned for higher density. Unfortunately, this was not done. The payment to the developer will in essence be a subsidy in that it will not have to bear the cost of bringing water rights or pay a fee-in-lieu as required by city ordinance.

—John Drew, Mayor

## Do you know . . .

Why we have a storm water conveyance system?

- Today's storm water moves faster than ever. Before urbanization, the majority of precipitation was naturally and slowly filtered by soil and grasses. As development occurred and pavements became widely used, storm water conveyance systems (ditches, gutters, storm sewers) were constructed to quickly transport water from streets to surface waters, like lakes, rivers, wetlands and streams.
- Instead of acres of farm and ranch land, we have rooftops, asphalt, concrete driveways and sidewalks.
- The NPDES permit program controls water pollution by requiring that storm water be treated before discharging into surface waters. (Source: Building a Better World for All of Us)
- A storm water conveyance system is not the same as a wastewater sewer system. Having a sump pump that drains into the wastewater sewer system is a violation of city code and should be corrected.
- Please do not direct storm water to sewer manholes.

To report an illicit discharge into the system call the City Offices, 435-752-9441 or 435-753-0313.

—Skarlet Bankhead, Administrative Services  
Director, City Recorder

### *Word of the Month*

As in "affordable" housing. Often this word is brought up in a discussion about low income housing.

#### AFFORDABLE

Affordable to whom? It is a relative term depending on your family situation. If you are a first responder, school teacher, nurse, or office professional here in Cache Valley, something affordable for your family based on your income is no longer your typical single family home as in the past. It is likely a form of multi-family housing.