

**MINUTES  
HARRISVILLE CITY COUNCIL  
August 1, 2023  
363 West Independence Blvd  
Harrisville, UT 84404**

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Minutes of a regular Harrisville City Council meeting held on August 1, 2023 at 7:00 P.M. in the Harrisville City Council Chambers, 363 West Independence Blvd., Harrisville, UT.

**Present:** Mayor Michelle Tait, Council Member Kenny Loveland, Council Member Grover Wilhelmsen, Council Member Steve Wiess, Council Member Max Jackson.

**Excused:** Council Member Blair Christensen, Bryan Fife, Parks and Recreation Director.

**Staff:** Jennie Knight, City Administrator, Justin Shinsel, Public Works Director, Mark Wilson, Chief of Police, Jessica Hardy, Finance Director, Jack Fogal, City Recorder.

**Visitors:** Arnold Tait, Sheila, Shanna Edwards, David Hickson, Carlos Aguilar, Diana Wilhelmsen, Beverly Foulger, Chris Cope, Rick Wetz, Jon Pierotti, Kathleen Hohosh, Darran Dalley, Brenda Tuinei, Rick Woods, Kimber Dalley, Boyd Fife.

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Tait called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**2. Opening Ceremony.**

Council Member Wilhelmsen opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Business Items.**

- a. Public Hearing** – to receive input from the public for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy for Harrisville City.

Council Member Loveland motioned to open the public hearing for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy for Harrisville City, second by Council Member Jackson.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes  
Council Member Weiss, Yes  
Council Member Christensen, Excused  
Council Member Jackson, Yes  
Council Member Loveland, Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Jennie Knight gave a brief overview of the Truth In Taxation process. The goal of the law is to bring transparency to property taxes. Property tax is the most stable source of revenue for the City to cover the general fund. Property taxes are revenue driven not rate driven. What that means is if property values rise property taxes decrease proportionately. This process does not account for any inflationary adjustments. The tax rate is set to generate the same amount of revenue as last year. To increase the certified tax rate a taxing entity must go through the Truth In Taxation process. Harrisville City receives 13% of property tax with other taxing entities receiving the remaining 87%. Property taxes pay for public safety, Parks and Recreation, Public Works and roads, administration, mayor and council, reserves, Justice Court, building and planning. Harrisville City's tax rate is average for the County. There are two options each year; to accept the current flat revenue rate, or Truth In Taxation to maintain the rate from the previous year to allow the revenue to increase by a small margin. If property tax is not reviewed on a regular basis, it can cause large gaps which was what occurred last year. The property tax increase is .69% over last year.

Chris Cope thanked Council for being proactive and trying to avoid a large tax increase. She is curious what happens when property values decrease. What is the increase needed to pay for.

Carlos Aguilar is concerned about the tax increase last year and another tax increase this year. He asked Council to reexamine the budget to see if we can be leaner or cut out anything that is not worthwhile to the City.

Rick Woods is against the increase due to last year's major increase. Last year's increase was hard for the Harrisville citizens. There are other taxing entities that are raising their taxes as well. His total tax bill is increasing by over \$200. He asked why was there an increase in law enforcement salaries and administrative salaries. His pay increases this year do not cover the tax increase.

Beverly Foulger explained that last year's increase was a killer. Nobody on Council listened last year and the citizens of Harrisville do not appreciate it.

Dave Hickson expressed that this tax increase is insignificant in the big picture but citizens are still struggling from last year's increase. He asked Council to please review the budget and see what is really needed. Last year there was no effort made to adjust the budget. There are a lot of citizens that feel like their voices are not heard. He wants to know that his voice is being heard. Taxation is servitude that is a burden that the people do not want.

Jon Pierotti attended the meeting last year. He questioned why Parks and Recreation asked for more money if they have not fixed the issues like the bathrooms or the missing playground equipment. He expressed that asking for more money after last year's tax increase is outrageous.

Kathy Hohosh is on a fixed budget. Council Members took an oath to protect citizens of Harrisville which includes their property. If taxes continue to raise it will make it hard for citizens to own property. She believed that the government had her best interest at heart and now knows different. She quoted John Adams "Posterity will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in heaven that I ever took half the pains to preserve it." People are crying out for relief from an increase in taxation. She hopes that Council rethinks raising taxes.

Kimber Dalley compared Harrisville City to the federal government. The City does not need a \$15,000,000 Public Works Facility. She brought a petition to remove Council and the Mayor from office and asked for signatures.

Boyd Fife explained the anger for the tax increase is all about timing. He does not understand last year's tax increase. In these other cities they have amenities to justify the taxes, Harrisville does not. Taxes have gone up for commercial property as well and that is just going to keep getting passed along to the consumer. He understands police wages increasing, but increases to administrators are not ok. Due to Trek, there are not as many people in attendance as there would have been. People are leaving Harrisville due to the taxes. There are no other cities that have the debt that Harrisville does.

Darren Dalley has lived in Harrisville for years. He enjoyed the small-town feel. He is concerned that the City has not improved after the tax increase last year. This little tax increase is not a big deal but last year's big increase was the real issue. The City needs to tighten its belt and get the budget under control. The City increasing taxes last year raised his mortgage payment by \$300 a month. Does the City really need the new equipment and trucks. The tax increase is killing the residents.

Brenda Tuinei is concerned about another raise in property taxes. She is concerned about how people are being notified about tax increases. She is not in support of another tax increase.

Council Member Weiss motioned to close the public hearing for and/or against the proposed increase to the certified tax rate levy for Harrisville City, second by Council Member Wilhelmsen.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes  
Council Member Weiss, Yes  
Council Member Christensen, Excused  
Council Member Jackson, Yes  
Council Member Loveland, Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Mayor and Council Follow Up**

Council Member Wilhelmsen asked staff to answer some of the questions brought up by the residents. He pointed out being in attendance every month is important to understanding the City's budget and what is going on in Harrisville. Jennie Knight explained one of the biggest challenges for the budget every year is being competitive in wages especially in public safety. The City was polled to see if citizens wanted to contract with Weber County for public safety services, and the opinion was resoundingly low. Of the other cities listed as having a lower tax rate Harrisville is the only City with its own police department. The City conducts wage studies and market analysis to be competitive and stop attrition of staff. This is the first year that the City has maintained staff. The cost of staff turnover is extremely high. We are not in competition with other small cities we are competing against Weber County, Ogden City and Salt Lake City, who can afford higher wages. After people are trained, they are more alluring to these larger entities. The City did receive a R.A.M.P. grant for new park equipment with a 50% match. The money

allotted in the budget last year was to cover the City's portion for that equipment. The equipment has been ordered and will be installed once it has been delivered. During an average year public works performs seven snow pushes, this year they performed twenty-seven snow pushes. Mayor Tait questioned about the increase to the salary line items. Jennie Knight explained the budget increased for the police department due to the need to hire an additional officer and additional staff for public works. Council Member Jackson inquired about the purchase of the equipment and vehicles. Jennie Knight explained the money comes from utility funds. Which comes from utility bills. Mayor Tait, clarified that this small increase was due to public comment last year. They were informed that the public would rather see small incremental increases instead of a large increase like last years. Mayor Tait inquired how the tax increase and meeting were communicated. Jennie Knight explained it was posted three times in the Standard Examiner, posted on the City website, posted the Utah Public Notice Website, sent out in the City newsletter, and posted in three places in the City. Those three places in the City are the City Office, outside of the Harrisville Cabin, and on 2150 N. Mayor Tait informed all in attendance there will be no action taken tonight. It will be voted on during the August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 City Council Meeting.

#### **4. Adjournment**

Council Member Loveland motioned to adjourn the meeting, second by Council Member Weiss.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

Council Member Wilhelmsen, Yes  
Council Member Weiss, Yes  
Council Member Christensen, Excused  
Council Member Jackson, Yes  
Council Member Loveland, Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

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**MICHELLE TAIT**  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**

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**Jack Fogal**  
City Recorder  
Approved this 8th day of August, 2023