

MOAB CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
May 4, 2021

Moab City Council held a Special Meeting on the above date. Consistent with provisions of the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act, Utah Code Ann. § 54-2-207(4), the Council Chair has issued written determinations supporting the decision to convene electronic meetings of the Council without a physical anchor location. Due to the health and safety risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Moab City Council held this meeting by electronic means. An audio recording is at <http://www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html>; a video recording is archived at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQOrIuJ_ju4.

Mayor Emily Niehaus called the Special Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Participating remotely were Councilmembers Rani Derasary, Karen Guzman-Newton, Tawny Knuteson-Boyd, Mike Duncan and Kalen Jones. City staff participating remotely were Manager Joel Linares, Assistant Manager Carly Castle, Attorney Laurie Simonson, Finance Director Ben Billingsley, Engineer Chuck Williams and Recorder Sommar Johnson.

UDOT Proposed Transit Service—Presentation and Discussion

Assistant City Manager Castle introduced the discussion regarding a transit pilot program, which included guests Jason Miller and Jon Nepstad of Fehr and Peers, consultants for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), and Monte Aldridge and Jeff Sanders of UDOT. Mr. Miller presented details on transit models for a pilot project to be funded by UDOT with eventual cost-sharing between Moab City and Grand County. Engineer Williams briefly presented anticipated costs for the City's participation in the program, including personnel, branding and education, vehicle storage and bus stop infrastructure. Mayor Niehaus asked whether the goal of the transit system is to solve for traffic congestion or parking congestion. Mr. Aldridge stated UDOT's goal is to solve for vehicular congestion. Mayor Niehaus brought up a prior proposal for a hop-on-hop-off bus on Main Street. Councilmember Jones inquired about the possibility of a downtown loop. Councilmembers indicated they were favorable to Option 4. Councilmember Duncan stated he likes the flexibility of the option. Councilmember Knuteson-Boyd emphasized the real need for a transit system yet she indicated she wants more infrastructure considerations addressed prior to the agreement. Councilmember Guzman-Newton noted she is excited about Option 4 and keeping large personal vehicles and trailers parked at lodging facilities. She also brought up the need for trailer parking, getting the County and Travel Council involved, and including vehicle maintenance in the Request for Proposals (RFP). Mayor Niehaus concurred about County and Travel Council involvement. Councilmember Derasary agreed about the need for information regarding City costs. She stated she was in favor of moving as many people as possible, likely using busses. She anticipated a discussion about a shared transit and bicycle lane. Councilmember Jones stated his interest in solving for congestion and contracting with a turnkey vendor. He noted the nature of the pilot would resolve issues encountered during the outset of the program. Engineer Williams stated transit stops between 100 South and 100 North on Main Street would not be appropriate, and costs for bus stops would be around \$2,000 per stop. Mayor Niehaus mentioned downtown trees for shade and Councilmember Guzman-Newton suggested hotels could provide shade structures for guests. Mr. Aldridge stated UDOT would not implement a transit pilot without the City's involvement. Councilmember Duncan reiterated the need for County involvement.

Arches National Park Timed Entry System Joint Letter—Approved

Presentation: Councilmember Derasary introduced the topic of a joint letter from the City and County to request implementation of a timed-entry program for Arches National Park. She

said it had been a year since a similar joint request including Castle Valley and expressed her interest in approving an updated request She cited examples of successful timed-entry programs at other parks and gave reasons why it could be beneficial to the local economy and tourist experience.

Motion: Councilmember Jones moved to approve a joint letter to the National Park Service to implement a pilot timed entry system. Councilmember Duncan seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Jones presented more information about the reservation system user interface and noted he had become aware of overwhelming crowds at Arches. Councilmember Guzman-Newton asked about capacity and other administrative details including whether tours and busses were subject to the timed entry system, and indicated she needed more information before she could support the letter. Other discussion ensued regarding details of the timed entry program.

Vote: The motion passed 4-1 aye with Councilmembers Jones, Derasary, Knuteson-Boyd and Duncan voting aye and Councilmember Guzman-Newton voting nay.

Workshop Regarding Proposed Fiscal Year End 2022 Budget

Finance Director Billingsley brought up the City's budget, commenting that the revenue streams support the City's immediate expenses but do not generate support for long-term infrastructure projects. He raised the subject of a proposed municipal property tax and presented an overview of the history of the City's property taxation and revenue streams, including proposals by the City to exempt a portion of residential property values, efforts to garner funds from gross business licensing and tourist lodging, actions by the state legislature to limit local use of sales tax revenues, and more. Billingsley mentioned other Utah communities that fund specific budget areas such as law enforcement with a property tax. He suggested local uses for a property tax, including infrastructure maintenance, bolstering the fund balance, and citizen priorities such as increased law enforcement, sustainability projects and other potential expenses. He described the proportion of potential tax revenue from commercial, residential, second-home properties and other properties and he outlined possible elements of a public information campaign. He laid out a timeline of steps to abide by Truth in Taxation procedures in the event the Council planned to move forward with enacting a municipal property tax. At Mayor Niehaus' request, Billingsley also described the method by which the tax would be collected from property owners. The Mayor asked for any dissent to the process by Councilmembers, and there was none. Councilmember Derasary asked at what point the financial goal of the tax would be determined. It was clarified that the proposed threshold would be announced and then the final amount would be determined in August, coinciding with the deadline for candidates to run for Council and Mayor. Discussion ensued regarding the potential threshold amount.

City Manager Linares mentioned the Market on Center would resume on Thursdays.

Adjournment: Councilmember Jones moved to adjourn. Councilmember Guzman-Newton seconded the motion. The vote to adjourn was unanimous and Mayor Niehaus adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Emily S. Niehaus, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Sommar Johnson, City Recorder