

Mayor's Report

3 January 2022 – 8 January 2022

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And we are off... Seems like we went from zero to sixty really fast.

At my day job, my boss has always been interested in what I am working on. To convey that, I often provide periodic status reports – especially right after starting a new position. In this job, YOU are my boss. Here is my first status report.

- Swearing In
- Meetings with our State House Representative Casey Snider
- Great Salt Lake Summit
- Cache Valley Wildlife Association Meeting
- Ridgeline Park Design Kick-Off
- Meetings with our US Congressman Blake Moore
- Meetings to prepare for next week's City Council meeting
- Establishment of Office Hours for me

We had the "Swearing In" for returning Council members Kathryn Beus, Nate Norman, and me (as the new Mayor) on 3 January 2022. Thanks to those that attended. Having completed the swearing in, we can now commence with the swearing at. I promise, that's the last time I will attempt that joke.

I met with Casey Snider, our Utah House Representative, a couple of times last week. The first was with former Nibley mayor, Shaun Dustin, to give continuity in our pursuit of State funding for road projects in Nibley. More on that later as things take shape. During the second meeting, Casey held a Town Hall in preparation for the upcoming legislative session. Several Nibley Citizens attended, and as you might guess, we spent a lot of time on land use. For me, I thanked the Utah Legislature for requiring that municipalities do the people's business in front of the people with the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act. Then I asked Casey if some of that required openness might be good at the State level as well. Oops, sometimes the quiet part comes out. Most productively, Casey offered to give special attention to the Nibley Youth that will be attending the Locals Day at the legislature. More on that after 19 January.

I spent most of Wednesday attending the Great Salt Lake Summit with our City Manager, Justin Maughan. The Great Salt Lake is at an historic low since the pioneers came to Utah. The Summit did a good job of identifying the problems with those low levels.

1. Air quality associated with the exposed lakebed. Specifically, pm10 aerosols and toxic dust from concentrated, naturally occurring elements, including arsenic.
2. Water supply issues. The worst is dust-on-snow that accelerates the spring runoff, making snowmelt difficult to capture in reservoirs and decreasing the tourism ski season. I love irony. Ironically, the lake-effect snow is not so-much an issue. It turns out that lake-effect snow is a tourism marketing ploy to compete with Colorado ski areas. Lake-effect snow only adds five percent to the snowpack at best, a limited number of peaks east of the Great Salk Lake.
3. Lost commercial revenue from tourism impacts, along with decreased brine shrimp harvesting and mineral extraction.

4. Impact on migratory birds. The Great Salt Lake and its associated wetlands are an invaluable food source for 10 million birds annually and 330 different species.

While the problems were easy to see, I struggled to be confident in the solutions. Certainly, water conservation is important. However, when we use water, we don't destroy it. We change its location, we change its phase (gas, liquid, solid), and we add contaminants that must be managed. Conservation seems the easy answer, and I am strongly in favor of water conservation. We need to talk more about conservation and efficiency in the future. However, a large percentage of the water that we use for agricultural and residential irrigation, even when "lost" as ground water, still ends up in the Great Salt Lake. As mentioned, I am a proponent of water conservation – especially when thinking about infrastructure costs. However, I struggle to see that conservation will save the Great Salt Lake.

I have enjoyed being a part of the Cache Valley Wildlife Association in the past, and while it's not part of the official Mayor job, I plan to continue. Becky Yeager kicked off the new year with a meeting on 6 January, and the group identified upcoming events for the year. This is a great opportunity for Nibley Citizens to be part of a greater community. I am proud that their leadership on wildlife issues started in Nibley and continues to grow throughout Cache Valley.

Darren Farar, Nibley Public Works Director, kicked off a meeting with our consultants for the design phase of a new park associated with the Ridgeline Park development. Stay tuned for an opportunity to help us serve the Citizens of Nibley with that park.

David Zook, Cache County Executive, organized a meeting with our US Congressman Blake Moore and the new mayors in Cache Valley. David noted that 10 of the 19 Mayors in Cache Valley are newly elected. My question for David was, "Why can't we retain good Mayors in Cache Valley?" Oops, sometimes the quiet part comes out. Regardless, I appreciated the opportunity to meet Congressman Moore and the other new Mayors. Congressman Moore, also relatively new to the job, mentioned his efforts on fiscal responsibility and reduced government regulation. I appreciate that. Nibley has never NOT had a balanced budget. Utah Code requires it, and it's also the right thing to do. I love irony. I mentioned to the other Mayors that local municipalities probably regulate the day-to-day lives of their citizens more than any other level of government. Just look at zoning laws. I'm not saying that's wrong, and in fact, it is one of the three reasons we have municipal government at all. Nevertheless, we are really active at regulation at the municipal level.

I worked with Cheryl Bodily, Nibley Municipal Clerk, and Justin Maughan on our next City Council Agenda. I look forward to hitting the cadence of preparing for periodic Council meetings. I won't spill the beans here, but I encourage you to check the Nibley website, subheading Government, to see what we are up to at our Thursday, 13 January, City Council Meeting.

And finally, I worked with Nibley Staff to establish Office Hours. This is an attempt to organize my now-schizophrenic life between Nibley City and Campbell Scientific. My Office Hours give Staff a reasonable expectation that I am available at predetermined times. It doesn't mean I am not available at other times; it just means those are good times to schedule meetings with me. My Office Hours are Monday, Wednesday afternoon, and Friday. As Citizens, you can think about my Office Hours, or not think about them. You are my boss, and I am always available to you.

Do you remember the last time you took a new position and wondered how long it would be before you would have the new job figured out? I knew what I was getting into when I put my name the ballot. Still, there were times last week when I was surprised at the number of moving parts in the mayor's job. With Shaun Dustin's help in the transition, with Nibley Staff's help to find our work cadence, and with your involvement, we can get 'er done. Call me, text me, or email me anytime (435-512-7495, larry@nibleycity.com). You are my boss.

I'm not certain that Nibley's Citizens are interested in this level of detail on what their mayor does. However, and as I learned during my engineering career, sometimes status reports benefit the reporter writer more that the report reader. Regardless, Thanks for reading.