

## **Mayor's Report**

**21 August 2023 – 11 September 2023**

Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss! Thanks for reading this status report. Here are the topics.

- **Utah League of Cities and Towns**
- **Second Graders from Heritage Elementary**
- **BRAG Human Services Board Meeting**
- **Trash Collection**
- **National Day of Service**

### **Utah League of Cities and Towns**

I spent several days last week, along with other council members, planning commissioners, and city staff, at the annual convention of the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT). The ULCT provides training for staff and elected officials and is an advocate for municipalities on issues being considered by the Utah Legislature. The ULCT has been an excellent way for me to learn about local governance over the past 20 years, and I appreciate the other members of Nibley's team that were also able to attend this convention.

Of the many presentations at the annual conference, I particularly enjoyed Governor Cox talking about an initiative that he called "Disagree Better." This initiative is similar to the Dignity Index that I have previously mentioned (April 23, 2023 Mayor's Journal) that promotes civil discourse with one another, even when we disagree. Governor Cox talked about a perception gap in our political process. He said the problem isn't that different sides think differently about a particular issue. Instead, the problem is that each side mistakenly thinks they know what the other side thinks without bothering to listen to the other side. That perception gap leads to opposing extremism rather than convergence to a common solution. Governor Cox mentioned George Washington's Farewell Address where Washington warned of the divisiveness of regional and political factions that cater to the extremities of our collective thought. I believe Washington described the perception gap that Governor Cox mentioned with the statement, "One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts." Washington cautioned that political extremes are a threat to our United States. These days, those extremists seem to be the ones that get the most attention in the media and on social media. If you are interested in reading Washington's Farewell Address (I recommend it), I have pasted a link below.

[https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Washingtons\\_Farewell\\_Address.pdf](https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.pdf)

Governor Cox also talked about the housing crisis in Utah. He explained the crisis as an issue of supply and demand. We all know that housing prices are high. So high that 77% of Utahans

are priced out of home ownership (in California, it's 76%). To fix this supply and demand imbalance, Governor Cox said we could reduce the demand for housing, which is what high interest rates are doing (in a bad way), or we could increase the housing supply. Increasing the supply largely falls to local municipalities, and we all feel the uncomfortable and unpleasant issues associated with rapid growth in our towns throughout Utah. The lack of supply also encourages the Utah State Legislature to put themselves in processes that are usually reserved for municipalities. As with the last couple of ULCT conferences, the housing crisis was a common theme. By the way, I have previously mentioned that I feel there is another way to reduce the demand for housing, one that is an alternative to raising interest rates. Our huge demand for housing is the result of unprecedented success in economic development. We are industrious, we work hard, and we expect economic success. We are, after all, the Beehive State. While it may not be any more popular than raising interest rates, I wonder if we could take our foot off the gas, just a little bit, on economic development to give the supply of housing a chance to catch up with the demand. If we didn't have as many jobs to offer (the unemployment rate in Cache County varies between one and two percent), then we might not be so short on housing. Certainly, I am proud of Utah's success in economic development. However, I am not particularly proud that we are currently the fastest growing state in the nation. I would be satisfied to be in the top five or ten.

There were lots of other things at the ULCT conference to talk about besides the housing crisis. I heard a number of great presentations on trail development and active transportation. I also enjoyed a session on protecting rivers and waterways that run through our cities. It was a worthwhile conference.

### **Second Graders from Heritage Elementary**

This is the second year that I have had a chance to spend a morning with the second-grade classes from Heritage Elementary School. Councilmembers Erin Mann and Kay Sweeten, along with city staff, helped explain to the students what Nibley City does. I love asking second graders (and other citizens), "Why do we even have Nibley City?" We talked about having cities (1) to provide services to people that they can't easily provide for themselves, (2) to plan and have local control to build a happy, safe, and healthy community, and (3) to make us proud of where we live.

After our discussion on the role of Nibley City, the second graders held a mock Nibley City Council meeting to hear public input and to discuss whether Nibley City should have a splash pad in a city park. They said yes. The other council members, staff, and I did our best to balance the discussion with the realities of construction costs, ongoing maintenance, and how to pay for the splash pad. Maybe we can get the second graders to help us the next time we go through a Truth-In-Taxation process.

## **BRAG Human Services Board Meeting**

I have mentioned before that I am on the Bear River Association of Governments (BRAG) Human Services Board. This is meaningful, and sometimes difficult, work that aims to mitigate the effects of homelessness, food insecurity, aging, and poverty in our region. Our Board oversees spending of federal aid to provide relief on these issues. Our most recent meeting focused on preparations for the homeless in Cache Valley for the upcoming winter. I also learned of a non-governmental agency that I would like to pass along to you. The Utah Families Feeding Families does great work to reduce food insecurity in our state. A specific effort is a system of Porch Pantries where people with surplus food voluntarily leave it for others that are in need. These Porch Pantries are always open, and the donated food is available without recipients having to prove limited income. There is a Porch Pantry in our area at the Emmanuel Baptist Church at 310 N 800 E in Hyrum.

## **Trash Collection**

If you have been following these status reports, then you have heard many times about preparations for transitioning our solid waste collection from Logan City to the newly formed Cache Waste Consortium. The transition is upon us, with trash collection and landfilling to be provided by Waste Management, a private company, starting the first of October. Please be aware of the information being provided by Nibley City and Waste Management through the Nibley website, social media, and the US mail. In addition, please call the Nibley City office if you have unanswered questions. Your questions help us understand what information is lacking as we try to keep our residents up-to-date on the transition.

## **National Day of Service**

On behalf of our citizens, I offer sincere thanks to the many volunteers who helped during the National Day of Service at our Morgan Farm and the Nibley-Millville Cemetery. I worked alongside some very energetic volunteers spreading gravel at the Morgan Farm until that job was complete, and then about twice that long leaning on a shovel while talking with residents about the happenings in Nibley City. It was a fun and productive outing, and I especially appreciate the folks that organized our local National Day of Service.

There were other meetings and goings on during the past few weeks, and as the results of those activities evolve, I will try to keep you posted. In the meantime, please be aware of upcoming Nibley Planning Commission and City Council meetings. As we explained to the second graders, the most important part of city governance is the involvement of its citizens.

Please call, text, or write anytime.

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