

2 May 2023

Dear Nibley Citizens,

The Nibley City staff and I are pleased to offer this budget for your consideration. This balanced budget is realistic, fiscally conservative, includes explanations and notes that go well beyond the numbers, and with your help, reflects the desires of Nibley citizens. There are any number of specific topics that we could focus on in this message, and I want to talk about one of the most important.

What make Nibley unique? What are the things that make us proud to live in Nibley? I suggest that our parks, recreation programs, and open spaces belong on this list. Nibley City exists, in part, because we desire important places for our community to gather and recreate, and it is unlikely that we could satisfy that desire as individuals. A recent Nibley citizen survey conducted by Utah State University showed how important our parks and open spaces are to us. The survey indicated that in the past year, 83 percent of the respondents recreated in our city parks. In addition, 85 percent said they enjoyed birds and wildlife in their yards and nearby neighborhoods. The survey showed that city parks and trails have an overwhelming positive influence on our wellbeing. Certainly, we value our parks, recreation programs, and open spaces.

Something of value is worthy of serious planning efforts to ensure that we protect and enhance that value. This is especially true for parks and open spaces because the land in and around Nibley is a limited resource. If we don't consider how to use that land wisely, and how to include parks and open spaces in that consideration, then we will lose that limited resource. A small and seemingly insignificant item in this budget appears on line 45-40-737 in "Capital Project Expenditures." This line commits \$40,000 to review and rewire our Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. Despite this task's relatively small footprint in the budget, it is one of the most important things we will do next year. Nibley's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, the City Council, and especially the citizens of Nibley have an opportunity to plan what our parks and open spaces will be five, ten, and twenty years from now.

We need soccer, softball, baseball, and flag football fields for our kids to play on. We have a young population, with forty percent of Nibley's population under the age of 18 years. Participation in Nibley youth sports programs has grown by a factor of 4.8 from 2016 to 2022. That's a compounded increase of 30 percent per year when our total population grew at less than two percent each year. Our recreation program and staff, led by Chad Wright, is truly amazing. Our new Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan must build on this success.

As if the demand for playing fields wasn't enough, we must also consider another requisite for Nibley's parks and open spaces. Our citizens have shown their desire to connect with nature by having access to enhanced natural areas in our city. Our Firefly Nature Park is a shining gem in Cache Valley, and the park currently in design in the Ridgeline Park project - with its trails, natural water features, non-programmed amenities, and enhanced natural gathering spaces - will make us proud. There are lots of areas in Nibley that are too wet for traditional construction, and the city can has gained, and will continue to gain, ownership of those areas through agreements with developers. Our new parks plan must consider the importance of these enhanced natural areas and include a strategy to manage these areas.

The desire for parks and open spaces is there, along with Nibley's unique identity established by those parks and open spaces. Our discussion on these amenities must include a plan to pay for them, and that discussion must include you, Nibley's citizens. The process that adopts this budget and adopts the new

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parks plan ensures that our dreams are founded on reality. Many of the costs for parks and open spaces are paid out of Nibley's General Fund, and the General Fund is largely financed by property tax and local sales tax, as shown in the General Fund Revenue Taxes section. In addition, Nibley City has put increased effort into securing grants for our parks and open spaces. Our "Grants" page shows that those efforts are paying off. Park-related grants received last year plus grants expected this year exceed \$3.5 million (nearly every item in the Grant Revenue table except CCOG and Stormwater). Many thanks to the efforts of city staff over many years that have led to this success to help fund our parks. Another source of funding is the Park Impact Fee, with anticipated revenue of about \$500 thousand as shown on line 56-37-790 in the "Parks Impact Fees" section. The City Council recently adopted an increased Park Impact Fee to ensure that new homes built in Nibley will not dilute the level of service enjoyed by our current residents.

Our upcoming work on the Parks Master Plan will allow us to dream big. How do we feel about an indoor recreation center? Are there public-private partnerships for us to consider? And of course, what mechanisms should we consider to pay for these dreams? Nibley's parks, recreation programs, and open spaces define our community. I look forward to hearing from you as we write a new plan for those items.

This message focused on parks, recreation, and open spaces, and I encourage you to share your thoughts as we work through the new plan. In addition, I hope you will share with me and the council your thoughts as we work through the adoption of next year's budget. Thank you for being part of our community, and thank you for the chance to serve that community,

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