

## MURRAY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, April 18, 2023**

Murray City Center - 5025 South State Street, Conference Room, Murray, Utah 84107

#### **Attendance:**

##### Council Members and others:

Garry Hrechkosy – Chair	District #5
Phil Markham – Vice Chair	District #1
Pam Cotter	District #2
Rosalba Dominguez	District #3 – Excused
Diane Turner	District #4

Doug Hill	Mayor Pro Tem	Jennifer Kennedy	City Council Executive Director
Brenda Moore	Finance Director	Pattie Johnson	Council Administration
Tammy Kikuchi	Chief Communications Officer	Brooke Smith	City Recorder
G.L. Critchfield	City Attorney	Aron Frisk	Public Works
Russ Kakala	Public Works Director	Jaren Hall	CED Director
Matt Erkelens	Forestry	Anthony Semone	NeighborWorks
Matt Gibbons	Murray Chamber of Commerce	Loran Pasalich	Murray Chamber of Commerce
Dave Stewart	City Lobbyist	Kory Holdaway	City Lobbyist
Citizens		Members of the Murray Chamber of Commerce	

**Conducting:** Mr. Hrechkosy called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

**Approval of Minutes:** Committee of the Whole – March 21, 2023.

Ms. Turner moved to approve, and Mr. Markham seconded the motion. All in favor 4-0.

#### **Discussion Items:**

##### **Presentation from the MCC (Murray Chamber of Commerce).**

Board Member and Government Relations Chairman of the MCC, Loran Pasalich shared a PowerPoint to discuss aspects and functions of the Murray Area Chamber. He read their mission statement, outlined benefits of membership, and introduced board members and ambassadors of the MCC. President and CEO, Matt Gibbons reviewed weekly networking opportunities, explained various educational events held in the community and discussed reasons for partnering with the Park City Chamber of Commerce. He spoke about Women in Business, the annual Gala, the Murray golf tournament, and highlighted recent ribbon cuttings. He described various charities that MCC supports and shared photos of past community events and discussed future outreach programs.

##### **2023 Legislative Summary.**

City Attorney, G.L. Critchfield and City Lobbyists, Dave Stewart and Kory Holdaway all shared in detail their general thoughts about the 2023 Legislative Session. Mr. Holdaway provided information related to all legislative bills and resolutions addressed this year. He discussed State growth and noted that 24 years ago the entire Utah State budget was less than \$2 billion; comparatively, this year the surplus alone was \$2 billion. He said the State benefited so much due to very strong ULCT (Utah League of Cities and Towns) representation who communicates critical issues effectively to all its city members. Mr. Stewart agreed not only were there record budgets of \$28 billion, but it was another record setting year for proposing and passing bills. Mr. Markham led a discussion about the caucus process and felt there was a lack of transparency. Mr. Holdaway agreed things have changed. Mr. Critchfield confirmed top issues related to cities this year were transportation, homelessness, and affordable housing. Mr. Holdaway confirmed

a record amount of money was allocated to transportation. Mr. Stewart discussed related processes that occurred, which included land use. Mr. Holdaway highlighted HB (House Bill) 406, HB301 and HB175.

**Grass removal rebate program.**

Ms. Cotter shared research that came about after a citizen's request for Murray to participate in the Utah Water Savers rebate program. In her analysis, she studied the State grass removal program, learned about the Conservation Garden Park, met with Mayor Hales and his administration and discussed the matter with City water division staff. She noted the City's existing Flip Your Strip program and Mr. Hrechkosy's recent initiative to update the related ordinance. She felt it was fine if citizens want to remove grass from other sections of their property but did not favor a rebate ultimately funded with taxpayer money.

From the Conservation Garden Park she shared information about how trees and vegetation help environments to reduce urban heat islands. She discussed how trees provide protection from harmful ultra violet rays, reduce and remove poor air quality, help lower temperatures, provide direct shading to cool buildings, and help lessen urban noise. Vegetation decreases storm water runoff and reduces pavement maintenance. Leaves remove various pollutants from the air, reduce evaporated emissions from parked vehicles, remove stored carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants by reducing energy demands. Healthy lawns prevent erosion by wind and water, improve flood control, reduce noise, provide wildlife habitats, and create a cooling effect during warm weather. Grass removes carbon from the air and produces oxygen. As a result, Ms. Cotter believes green yards are beneficial to cities and since the State program had many stipulations, she wondered if an educational pilot program would provide better understanding for Murray citizens.

Mr. Markham agreed another rebate program would negatively impact water department funds or cause a rate increase if a mass amount of people remove grass expecting money in return. He thought a reasonable educational program was important to properly teach citizens about minimizing landscape water use and avoid wrong expectations.

Mr. Hrechkosy agreed removing grass from other lawn areas is a personal preference and rather than add another incentive program, the City should either update the current park strip ordinance or get rid of it, since it is not enforced. Public Works Director, Russ Kakala did not think a new pilot program was necessary because the Flip Your Strip program was a good one that should be left alone. He did not favor incentivizing front yards full of gravel but agreed if citizens want to pull up grass they can. City Engineer, Trae Stokes confirmed more and more people are using the existing program. There was consensus to increase education about the existing City program, update the City's website to a more user-friendly system for finding the related educational information and not join the State program.

**Adjournment: 5:34 p.m.**

**Pattie Johnson  
Council Office Administrator III**